



**SOURCES OF
THE HISTORY OF INDIA**

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PREFACE

WE take pleasure in releasing the fourth volume in the Series—'Sources of the History of India'. It covers Bihar, Orissa, Bengal, Manipur and Tripura, as scheduled under the Project. As observed in the Preface to the first volume under the Series published in 1978, the Series

'is intended to fill up a great void in Indian historiography our primary objective in undertaking this multi-volumed project is to help advanced students of history, researchers and teachers in getting to know the wealth of historical source-material lying scattered in different parts of the country and in different languages'.

While the value of source-material—archaeological, epigraphic, numismatic, literary and of other categories; as indispensable aids to the knowledge of history is readily conceded, the unfortunate fact remains that not much care has been taken so far either to collect or to publicise them. It is also an ascertained fact that our archival papers still continue to be mostly government or administrative papers. There are hardly any agencies to take proper charge of manuscripts and papers in the custody of individuals, families, besides private and autonomous organisations. The recommendations of the Historical Records Commission are no better than pious wishes, reiterated, in all solemnity, year after year, but persistently left to linger in files. Not all archival institutions have printed catalogues or classified inventories of their preserve which can be made readily available to scholars. Papers and documents in the custody of various departments under the Government tell the same story. In most cases, they are not even catalogued and classified. Instances are by no means rare where paper-objects, for lack of measures of preservation, tend to disintegrate. Barring the Government Archives and a few Libraries, no institution is provided with facilities of re-

prography; and as such, in spite of their willingness to help research students, they can do very little. Laws are yet to be framed, making it obligatory for institutions and individuals owning documents of historical importance, to declare or register them, not to speak of handing them over to archives, libraries and museums, authorised to receive, preserve and utilize them.

In the circumstances, it becomes essential that a survey of sources available, till date, should be undertaken and announced for the benefit of research students. Even then, this, by itself, is not enough. It is also necessary to trace the sources that lie unnoticed and hence untapped. Such materials are varied and plentiful. The objective of our project is thus not only to survey and assess the sources that are readily available but also to ascertain the nature and the extent to which the available source-material has been utilised so far and also the gaps that still remain to be filled up. The latter deserve more attention than they have received till now.

From a review of the work done in recent years it would appear that research, in an intensive and concentrated manner, has centred round certain aspects and periods of our history to the near-exclusion of others. This is primarily due to fact that some material indispensable for research in these untrodden areas, remains practically inaccessible, mainly because the papers have become too brittle to be handled. In not a few cases, there has been even no announcement that such papers do exist. Our attempts are aimed at focussing attention on the need of discovering and utilising untapped material, besides presenting a survey and assessment of material available and made use of, so far.

The present venture of the Institute is only an humble effort to put the study of Indian history on a correct perspective. We earnestly hope that all research-centres, in general, and universities, in particular, in the context of the observations made above, will formulate a comprehensive project aimed at (i) locating extant relevant material in the custody of families and individuals, institutions or organisations other than those covered by Archival Services at the State levels, and (ii) preparation of classified catalogues of different categories of objects. The Institute will

be happy to extend its full co-operation in such projects, in continuation of the process initiated by it. Steps, however, for the acquisition of material and their preservation with a view to utilisation can only be taken at the Government levels. Our purpose in presenting the current series, as already stated, is to acquaint our scholars with material, so far available and utilised, as well as with material, referred to in the papers incorporated in this volume and in preceding ones, which remain to be explored and acquired for historical purpose.

The emphasis on the need of acquisition and preservation of paper-objects does not necessarily mean that we can afford to be complacent in regard to materials in the form of seals, writings on stones/rocks, copperplates and archaeological finds, as a whole. The problem in regard to these more enduring types of material is related not so much to preservation as to their acquisition. Apart from any comprehensive project of excavation in historic sites, which remains largely neglected, there is the undeniable fact of utter neglect in which archaeological objects, other than those accommodated in museums, remain exposed. These lie scattered over areas, often inaccessible, with hardly anything than a 'Notification' announcing that the sites in which they remain are 'protected'. We cannot afford to persist in our indifference any more. As one of our contributors to the present volume observes :

'In these days of multidisciplinary approach to the subject, one has to handle varied types of sources for the history of a country. He will have to take into account the reports of excavations, literary texts as well as floating tradition and technological study of the extant remains. A correct approach to the history of a given period will depend on the proper assessment and co-operation of these varied sources.'

The guide-lines followed in this volume, as in others in the Series, are indicated below for the information of the readers so as to enable them to meaningfully follow the contents of papers appearing hereinafter, irrespective of the region or the period dealt with.

- I. Nature of the source-material in general.
- II. Classification of source-material.
- III. A critical review of the extent and dependability of the different categories of source-material.
- IV. The extent to which the source-material has been utilised by historians and the fields which remain to be covered, and
- V. Any problem or difficulty in using the source-material.

The pattern, as will be evident, thus aims at more than a mere stock-taking of what has been done so far. It attempts to indicate for the benefit of future research-workers and their guides, the fields those remain untraversed, not so much because of dearth of material as because of our own neglect or inability to explore and utilise them to the desirable extent.

The present volume deals with five areas viz., Bihar, Orissa, Bengal, Manipur and Tripura. Unlike other volumes, the present one covers regions which possess territorial contiguity in a large measure and constitute the bulk of Eastern India zone. Even then, attention deserves to be drawn to the fact that these regions, in the treatment of papers appearing in the volume are not co-terminus with their present territorial set-up. These have undergone, as is well-known, drastic changes on grounds of administrative need and political demands. For instance, Bengal, as dealt with here, covers not merely the truncated State, now known as West Bengal, but what once used to be undivided Bengal. Since our survey covers the entire period of a particular region, ancient, medieval and modern, each contributor, justifiably enough, has dealt with the region, as a whole as it was during the period covered by the paper, irrespective of subsequent administrative boundary adjustments effected from time to time. The number of papers, areawise, is as follows :

Bihar 8, Orissa 11, Bengal 10, Manipur 2, and Tripura 2—totalling 33.

We do not claim that the papers presented in the volume cover all aspects of sources relative to a period or a region ; what, however, we claim is that the discussions on the selected topics are exhaustive. The surveys are comprehensive, as far as

possible ; what is perhaps more important is that they indicate the limitations under which researches are conducted due to lack of adequate material and emphasise the need of multidisciplinary approach to a given subject under investigation. The papers, it may also be claimed, conform to near-uniformity in their pattern and do not overlap. It can reasonably be expected that the present volume, as a whole, being a work of mature scholarship, offer a fairly comprehensive survey and a critical assessment of source-material relevant to the study of Eastern India, comprising Bihar, Orissa, Bengal, Manipur and Tripura, through the ages—ancient, medieval and modern.

We refrain from commenting on the individual contribution and would content ourselves by saying that the papers, coming from competent scholars, taken together, amply fulfil the object aimed at by the Series. I convey to them grateful thanks to the contributors for their kind co-operation which has made this publication possible.

I recall with grateful appreciation the financial assistance extended by the Department of Culture, Government of India and the Directorates of Education, Governments of Orissa and West Bengal, enabling the Institute to present the volume to the scholars and reading public.

My cordial thanks are due to Dr. Kalyan Kumar Dasgupta and Dr. N. N. Bhattacharya of the University of Calcutta and Dr. Tarasankar Banerjee of Visva-Bharati University, Shantiniketan for their kind and ungrudging help in editing the papers. I am also thankful to Mrs. Minati Chattopadhyay for her help in the preparation of the volume. My thanks are, finally, due to Shri Dasharathi Mukhopadhyay and to Shri Bijalibhushan Mitra for seeing the volume to the Press and to Shri Tridibesh Basu of K. P. Basu Printing Works for his personal attention in supervising the printing work.

Calcutta, 21 September, 1982

N. R. RAY



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1 • Bihar



Ancient Period

A SURVEY OF THE SOURCES OF HISTORY OF ANCIENT BIHAR

DR. B. P. MAZUMDAR

(*Patna University*)

1

IN THESE DAYS of multidisciplinary approach to a subject, one has to handle varied types of sources for the history of a country. He will have to take into account the reports of excavations, literary texts as well as floating tradition and technological study of the extant remains. A correct approach to the history of a given period will depend on the proper assessment and co-relation of these varied sources. But it should not be presumed that all types of sources would be available for all the distinctive phases of the early history of Bihar. To illustrate, inscriptions become a source only from the time of Asoka. Scientists have very recently taken up the technological aspect of only a few articles like glass, beads, bronze and terracottas of only a few places. Hence the relative changes in technology even in a particular metallic industry throughout Bihar have yet to be worked out.

Archaeology alone helps us to know the history of Bihar during the pre- and proto-historic periods. The remains of the palaeolithic (Early Middle and Late Stone age) are pebbles, hand-axes, cleavers, scrapers etc. which were noticed first by V. Ball and later on by others at several places in Jharia, Bokaro, Bhimbandh (in Monghyr district), Jethian Valley in Nawada district, Khutia (7 miles south of Deoghar), Kurumgarh (in Ranchi district), Lotatahar, Subarnarekha Valley etc. The Ancient Indian History and Archaeology Department of the

Patna University discovered varied types of microlith like blades at Nainsukh Kothi, near Antichak. Neoliths have been found at several places in Bihar, which were spotted first by V. Ball. Ball discovered shouldered celts from Dhalbhum in 1875 and Parasnath hill in Hazaribagh district.¹ Other important sites are Jamalpur (Monghyr district), Sanjai Valley in Singhbhum district, and Chirand (10 km. east of Chapra town). The excavations at Chirand show that in this age, people used bone tools like needles, awls, arrowheads, axes, pendants. These prove that they were still at hunting stage. But at the same time they took to fishing and agriculture and began to lead a communal life. At Chirand was found a large hearth with a unit of three cooking positions. These neolithic people possibly lived in reed huts.

The neolithic age was succeeded by the chalcolithic age in which people mostly used black-and-red ware. The sites of this age are Sonapur, Chirand, Chechar and Uriup. Both at Sonapur and Chirand were found potteries, some of which have white painting in strokes, which are similar to black-and-red wares of Ahar and Gilund in Rajasthan.

The period between the fifth and second century B.C. is regarded as the age of the Northern Black Polished Ware (abbreviated as N.B.P.). Though iron is associated with chalcolithic phase in Bihar, yet the knowledge of this metal was utilized to a greater extent in the N.B.P. phase. Among the sites of this N.B.P. phase are Chirand (Period III), Champa, Rajgir, Chakramdas (Vaisali), Sonapur (Period I) and Kumrahar (Patna). Excavations at old Vaisali area during the years between 1958 and 1962 brought to light a *stupa* containing a relic casket in soapstone probably of the Buddha, a defence wall of baked bricks, numerous terracotta figurines, beads, coins and N.B.P. Wares. In 1974-1976 it was found that the original brick-*stupa* near Asoka's pillar at Vaisali had been twice enlarged and small *stupas* had been constructed along the circumambulatory path. The exploration party, which excavated Kumrahar in between 1951 and 1955, proved that the Maurya hall or palace did not expand either east or west, as held earlier by Spooner in 1912. The pillar stumps of this hall had been removed in 2nd century B.C. A. Ghosh found a large *stupa* with a polygonal base, punch-

marked and cast copper coins and clay sealings of the first century B.C. at Nandangarh (south-west of Lauriya-Nandangarh).

As it is not possible to mention all the results of excavations, a brief survey of the remains of big structures of the period between Mauryas and Guptas is outlined here. On the Khalatika-parvate (Barabar) and Nagarjuni hills near Gaya, were constructed caves in the Maurya period. Among these cave inscriptions, three belong to the time of Asoka and another three of Dasaratha. Remains of huge forts made of solid burnt bricks have been found at Katragarh (Muzaffarpur district) and Balirajgarh (Madhubani district). The Bodh Gaya railings of grey sandstone have been assigned to the Sunga period. Inscriptions on these railings prove that some of them were erected by Arya Kurangi, queen of Indraghimitra and Nagadevi, queen of Brahmamitra. Scholars are of opinion that these railing are later than those of Bharhut and earlier than Sanchi. The view of Cunningham that the present Bodh Gaya Temple had been constructed in the Kushana period has been rejected by modern scholars. Its rectilinear towers could not have been erected during the Kushana age. The example of evolution of brick-built monasteries in the Sunga period is that of the monasteries at Kumrahar. One of these has only one room (36.6"×6.6") and a verandah 42 feet long and about 6 feet wide. During the Kushana period one monastery at this place had rooms on three sides, one measuring 15"×9.6", and a rectangular courtyard. Another monastery of the same period and place had 14 rooms on one side and 4 halls in the front. This monastery was provided with burnt-brick drains. A seal shows that a monastery-cum-medical institution existed in the Gupta period. A temple of Vishnu, dated in the seventh century A.D. has been unearthed at Aphsad in Gaya. Its stucco panels depict scenes from the *Ramayana*.

There are several sites which have been assigned to the late Gupta and post-Gupta age. It is difficult to ascertain the exact date when the monasteries of Nalanda and Vikramasila and several other fortifications had been raised. Some monasteries at Nalanda were rebuilt in the Pala period. The one at Site

No. I, which probably was constructed originally in the sixth or seventh century A.D., had been rebuilt nine times. It was surrounded by a thick wall (6'5"—7'5"). The cells, each about 10 ft. square, probably occupied by students, were arranged all along that interior wall. This monastery, as well as those at Site Nos. 9, 11 and 6 were at least double-storeyed buildings. All the monasteries were rectangular and most of these had sets of oven in the courtyard. How many monasteries other than the Mahavihara existed at Antichak (13 km. north of Kahalgau Railway station), which represents the site of the Vikramasila monastery, has yet to be ascertained. Scholars assign the building of Brahmanical temples to the ninth century A.D., as for example, that of Taradevi within the compound of Bodh-Gaya temple, and another rock temple at Colgong². A number of fortified settlements at Balirajgarh in Madhubani district, Katragadh in Muzaffarpur district, Srinagar in Saharsa district, Naulagarh, Jaimangalagarh in Begusari district, etc. which belong to the Pala period have not been properly excavated.

II

Inscriptions, though a part of archaeology are more helpful in some respects than remains of ancient monuments and buildings. As usually they are dated, historians can easily utilize the information given in inscriptions. Among the deciphered inscriptions, the first in point of time, belongs to the reign of Asoka. Unlike the Delhi-Topra Pillar (containing all the 7 pillar edicts of Asoka), the monolithic pillars at Lauriya-Ararak, Lauriya-Nandangarh and Rampurva (all in Champaran) dated 26th regnal year, contain the first six pillar edicts of Asoka. In the artificial cave in Chandan Pir hill, near Sasaram is inscribed the Minor Rock Edict, where Asoka is stated to have become more zealous in *Dhamma*. As stated earlier there are inscriptions of Asoka and his grandson Dasaratha in caves on Barabar and Nagarjuni hills.

Till the Gupta period, inscriptions of the post-Mauryas do not provide enough materials for the history of Bihar. The

reference to a few names like *Mokhalinam*, found at Gorathagiri, paleographically datable to third century B.C., or Maninaga and Bhagini Sumagadha on an inscription found at Maniyer Math (Rajgir), datable paleographically to the first or second century A.D., or on the Bodh-Gaya railings, datable to the first century B.C., do not help us much for our knowledge of history. Of course, the clay seal of Mahadevi Prabhudama, at Basarh (Vaisali) is significant. As she is described as the sister of Mahakshatrapa Rudrasena and daughter of Mahakshatrapa Rudrasimha, scholars conjecture that the Saka-Murundas ruled over North Bihar in the third century A.D.

Inscriptions of the time of Imperial and Later Guptas refer to political as well as socio-economic history. In spite of the generally accepted view that the two copper-plates found at Gaya and Nalanda, referring respectively to years 9 and 5 of Samudragupta as spurious, they are important since being forgeries of the sixth-seventh or seventh-eighth centuries, they are important since they throw light on the administrative personnel and land grants to Brahmanas in the relevant period.^{2a} In point of time, the seal of Mahadevi Druvasvamini, queen of Chandragupta II, issued from Vaisali (in Bihar), is the first inscription of the Imperial Guptas. The Bihar stone-pillar inscription (found at Biharsharif) attributed to Skanda Gupta by Fleet and to Budha Gupta or Narasimha Gupta by B. P. Sinha,³ gives an idea of the administrative and economic condition. The Nalanda seals of Budha Gupta and Vishnu Gupta acquaint us with the genealogy of Later Guptas up to Vishnu Gupta, a son of Kumara Gupta III. The genealogy and activities of the Later Guptas of Magadha are also known from several other inscriptions. The inscriptions of Adityasena found at Aphsad, Mandar hill (Bhagalpur district) and Shahpur (Nalanda district) present the genealogy from Krishnagupta to Adityasena, and refer to the expeditions of Jivita Gupta I, the building of a Vishnu temple by Adityasena at Aphsad, the excavation of Papaharini tank and a Vishnu temple at Mandar hill (Bausi). Vishnu Gupta, grandson of Adityasena, issued the Mangraon (Bhojpur) copperplate. The Deo-Baranark Pillar-inscription (in Bhojpur district) mentions the kings of this dynasty up to Jivita Gupta II, who built a temple for the Sun-god.

Other seals and inscriptions acquaint us with more of non-political history. The numerous seals from Vaisali refer to officials like a *Vinayasthitisthapaka*, and also to guilds. As distinguished from these seals of Vaisali, the Nalanda seals seem to be votive seals, on which are engraved the names of princes, nobles, officials etc. Of course, the Nalanda seals of Avantivarman and Suva/Sucha indicate the genealogy of Maukharis to some extent.^{3a} The inscriptions in Barabar-Nagarjuni hill introduce three generations of Maukhari chieftains, namely, Yajnavarman, Sardulavarman and Anantavarman, all of whom ruled in Gaya district. At Kumrahar was found a seal which reads *Arogya-vihara-bhikshu-sanghasya* or sanatorium-cum-hospital of the monastic order. The Bodh-Gaya inscription of Mahanaman II dated year 269/588-589 B.C. records the construction of a mansion at Bodhimandapa.

As for political history, the only important inscription on the eve of Harsa's accession is a seal-matrix, found at Rohtasgarh, which shows that Sasanka was a *mahasamanta* of the Rohtas area in the Shahabad district. In which year did he become the master of Gauda is, however, unknown to historians.

Inscriptions of the period between c. 750 A.D. and c. 1206 A.D. are significant for all the facets of history. First, these indicate the political history of Bihar. Their findspots show that the centre of Pala power was in Bihar, because out of 72 Pala inscriptions discovered so far, as many as 56 were found in Bihar. All the inscriptions of Devapala (Nalanda yrs. 3, 35 or 39; Kurkhihar yr. 9, Hilsa yr. 25, Monghyr yr. 33), Vighrapala II (Kurkhihar image inscriptions of yrs. 3, 19), Nayapala (Gaya Temple inscriptions, yr. 15, Valgudar inscr. yr. 13), Ramapala (Tetrawan, yr. 3, Monghyr district 14, Arma 26, Monghyr 27, Chandimau 42), Govindapala (Gaya, dated V.S. 1232 and 11, 78 A.D.) and Palapala (Jayanagar, yr. 35) belong to Bihar. These inscriptions furnish the extent of rule of the Palas in Bihar. For example, till at least the 17th year of his reign Narayanapala was in possession of Magadha. While the Nongarh, Valgudar, Jayanagar and Arma inscriptions have revealed the duration of rule of Madanapala, the Sanokhar inscription proves that Ballasena controlled the Bhagalpur region. The recently discovered

Kandi and Antichak inscriptions refer to rulers or feudatories who were not known to earlier historians. The annexations of Gaya, Nalanda, Hazaribagh and Saran districts by the Gurjara-Pratihara ruler Mahendrapala are known from the Ramagaya, Guneriya, Biharsharif, Itkhorī (in Hazaribagh district) and Dighwa-Dubauli (Saran district) inscriptions. Sometime before his 54th regnal year, Narayanapala was able to recover Nalanda district. North Bihar was recovered by Mahipala I, as is evident from the two Imadpur inscriptions, dated yr. 48. The loss of Mithila by Palas is indicated by the so-called Simraon inscription,⁴ dated 1097 A.D. Besides, the Gurjara-Pratihara's, the suzerainty of the Gahadavala rulers over parts of Bihar is known from several inscriptions. While the Maner plates, dated 1124 A.D., and Lar plates, dated 1146 A.D., refer to Govindachandra's occupation of Patna and Monghyr districts, Pratapadhavala's inscriptions at Tutrahi falls (5 miles west of Tilothu), Phulwaria and Tarachandi (1169 A.D.) and the Sihvar plates (1175 A.D.) and Bodh-Gaya (1183-1192 A.D.) inscriptions refer to the hold of Rohtas, Bhojpur, Patna and Gaya districts by Vijayachandra and Jayachandra of the Gahadavala dynasty.

The administrative system in the time of Palas is mainly known from inscriptions. As in the earlier kingdom the administrative units in the Pala kingdom were *bhukti*, *vishaya*, *vithi* or *naya* and *grama*. Srinagarabhukti included the *Visayas* of Krimila, Gaya and Rajagraha. Tirabhukti (modern Tirhut) was at least comprised of Kaksa and Haudreya or Hodreya *vishayas*⁵. The Nalanda copper-plate of Dharmapala refers to the grant of Uttarama-*grama*, which was within Gaya-*vishaya* of Nagara-*bhukti* and belonging to jambunadi-*vithi*⁶. That Nagara-*bhukti* was identical with Srinagara-*bhukti* is clear from Nalanda copperplate of Devapala, yr. 39. This plate also refers to *Vyaghratati-mandala*, which cannot be identified. It is interesting to note that a grant of Sauryadityadeva, dated VS 1077/1020 A.D. refers to the gift of Vanapalli-*grama* as being situated in Vyalisi-*vishaya* within Daradgandaki-*mandala*.⁷ The inscriptions of Sauryaditya alone attach a numerical figure to a *vishaya* in Bihar. D. C. Sircar believes that the administrative unit mentioned in the above inscription (VS 1077) consists of forty-two villages.

He draws attention to the other grant of Sauryaditya, dated VS 1083, which mentions a *vishaya* called Dvichatvarimsatika.⁸ Besides the references to these administrative divisions, the landgrants of the time of the Palas and Gahadavalas refer to feudatories (without names) of different grades, large number of officials and items of revenue.

The social history of the period has been written on the basis of inscriptions. The genealogy, *gotras* and *pravaras* of Brahmana donees mentioned in inscriptions, indicate whether they or their ancestors came from outside. Their field of specialization was usually in the Vedic literature, for example, *Yajurveda*, *Vajasaneyi-samhita*, *Chhandogya*. References to other castes in inscriptions are few. The texts of the Maner and Lar plates of Govindachandra Gahadavala were written by Karanika Thakkurās Visvabhūpa and Selhana respectively.⁹ There is little doubt that these Karanikas belonged to the Karana caste. Probably Vaidyas did not constitute themselves into a caste in Bihar. That Sahadeva, the composer of the inscription of Visvaditya (of Gaya) dated yr. 15 of Nayapala (c. 1053 A.D.), was a *vaji-vaidya*¹⁰ indicates that he was really a veterinary surgeon (of horses) and not one belonging to the Vaidya caste. Again, the other grant of the same feudatory ruler, dated in the same year, states that the composer of the *prasasti* was Vaidya Vajrapani.¹¹

Inscriptions of the period between c. 750 and 1206 A.D. provide important data for religious history, as for example, distribution of Buddhist monasteries and temples and temples of Brahmanical deities, the tolerant policy of the Pala kings, syncretism as well as intolerance.¹²

A useful source-material for religious sects lies in these inscriptions. It is noteworthy that there is no mention of Rama and Radha-Krishna cults in these inscriptions. Equally interesting is the fact that one comes across new names of the Mother-Goddess, as for example, Gauseva or Gausava in the Valgudar inscription of the eighth or ninth century A.D.¹³, Pundesvari in Rajauna inscription of the reign of Nayapala¹⁴ and Purnesvari in the Jayanagar image inscription, dated in the year 35 of Palapala.¹⁵

Although inscriptions on stones, copper-plates, bronzes and

clay tablets and seals constitute a valuable source for the history of Bihar, yet they are not entirely dependable. As in inscriptions of other dynasties, those of the Pala Kings follow a set pattern at least regarding the list of officials. Again high sounding titles are given for some donors. Sangramagupta is described in the Panchobh copper-plate as *Maharajadhiraja Mahamandalika*. Vague claims also pose problems before historians. The Gaya inscription of Yakshapala does not state which king of Gauda raised the status of Sudraka as a monarch.¹⁶ Similarly, the partly damaged Antichak inscription does not state which king of Vanga was defeated by Sahura.¹⁷ R. C. Majumdar and D. C. Sircar differed over the date of the Imadpur image inscriptions of Mahipala.

Inscriptions discovered in areas outside Bihar furnish valuable data for our purpose. Those of Orissa, U. P., Madhya Pradesh and other States refer to the migration of some Brahmanas of Bihar.¹⁸ The Hathigumpha inscription refers to the attack on Gorathagiri (Barabar hill, Gaya), expeditions against Magadha and Anga and the recovery of a Jina idol, which had been taken away by a Nanda king, by Kharavela. A few examples of foreign invasions on Bihar during the early medieval period as known from epigraphs other than those of Bihar, are: (a) that the command of Rashtrakuta Krishna II (878-914 A.D.) was obeyed by Anga and Magadha along with Kalinga and Vanga (Verse 13 of Deoli copper-plate, E.I.V. 193), (b) that Yasovarman Chandella had weakened the Maithilas and his son Dhanga kept the queens of Radha and Anga (Khajuraho ins. No. II., Verse 23; No. IV., Verse 46 in E.I. 126, 132, 145), (c) devastation of Champaranya (Champaran?) by Yasahkarna (Bheraghat ins. of Narasimha Kalacuri, CII. IV, p. 319). It is difficult to judge the veracity of these claims.

III

Coins speak of the economic condition. Occasionally they also throw light on the political history of a period. In Bihar the earliest metallic coins seem to have been introduced in about

the sixth century B.C. Except for two gold coins of Huvishka,¹⁹ the two metals used for currency till the Gupta period were of silver and copper. The punch-marked silver coins, bearing varied types of symbols, were current in Bihar till at least the Maurya period. Though the find spots of these coins were Bhalna (Gaya district), Gorhoghat (Bhagalpur), Gohada (Monghyr), Golakpur (Patna town), Jalloi (Darbhanga), Patraha (Purnea), Sikta (Champanan), Vaisali, etc., yet it is difficult to prove conclusively whether these were issued from a central mint. But this much is certain that they originally belonged to Magadha. In contrast, the earliest punch-marked copper coins were issued from a central mint. The Mauryas also issued cast copper coins. It is difficult to find out the date of issue of these coins. Similarly, there is no certainty whether the coins of Indraghimitra and Bhumimitra discovered from Kumrahar and Ayodhya coins from Buxar indicate their rule in Bihar. The discovery of a single circular copper coin of Satakanisa at Champā in 1974 does not prove that the Satavahanas ruled over Bhagalpur. R. D. Banerji, Adris Banerji and A. S. Altekar were of opinion that the copper coins of Kushana age found at numerous places like Bodh Gaya, Kumrahar, Belwadaga and Karra in Ranchi, Chirand, Sultanganj (Bhagalpur), Monghyr, Radhia and Lauriya-Nandangarh, Vaisali, prove that the Kushanas had established their sway in Bihar. If findspot of coins be the criteria, we have to believe that Wema Kadphises also ruled over Bihar, as 23 of his coins were found at Buxar. The greater probability is that these coins were the results of trade contact in the same manner as the Puri-Kushana coins found in Rakha hills (Singhbhum), Kusumbagan and Pendrapara (Sereikela), and issued in three denominations (between 60 and 160 grains) and bearing no symbol and 18 Kidara Kushana coins found at Rafiganja in Gaya district.²⁰

It is surprising that so far only 22 gold coins, 1 silver (from Sultanganj, Bhagalpur) and only 22 copper coins (all from Kumrahar) of the Gupta age have been found in Bihar. Of these, silver and copper coins belong to the reign of Chandragupta II.

Very few coins of the post-Gupta age have been discovered

in Bihar. Excepting a gold coin each of Sasanka (from Nalanda) and Gangeyadeva Kalacuri (from Chirand), copper coins of Gangeyadeva Kalacuri (preserved in the Patna Museum) and electrum coins of Govindachandra Gahadavala [found at Chausa (Rohtas), Kalangarh and Surajgarha (Monghyr) and Biro (Ranchi)], not a single coin of the Maukharis of Gaya, the Later Guptas and Palas, has been discovered in Bihar. Of course early historians like V. A. Smith believed that Vignrahapala I or III of the Pala dynasty issued coins bearing the legend *Sri Vigna* or *Sri Vignraha*.²¹ Though the Gaya inscription of Dharmapala refers to *dramma*, yet till now not a single coin of his reign has been unearthed.

IV

Extant literature acquaints us with the history of Bihar to some extent. It is necessary to remember that the dates of composition of many of these texts can not be precisely determined. All the sources for a given period also do not present identical facts. The earliest literary text the *Rigveda* III.53.14 refers to an unfriendly chieftain Pramaganda, who lived in Kikata, which has been identified with Magadha. Uncharitable remarks about Magadha are made in the *Atharvaveda* V.22.14 and XV.2.5. All the eighteen hymns relating to the Vratyas in Book XV of the *Atharvaveda* convey the impression that the Vratyas were a branch of Aryans who came to South Bihar. The expansion of the Aryans in North Bihar is recorded in the *Satapatha Brahmana*, which has been assigned generally to the eighth century B.C. Neither this nor any other Vedic text gives a systematic history of the dynasties of Bihar. Stray references to Anga Vairochana as an anointed king and to the life of Dirghatamas, an Angirasa *rishi*, are mentioned in the *Aitareya Brahmana*. These references prove that Anga had been Aryanized at a period later than the date of composition of the *Atharvaveda*, where (AV. V.22.14) the poet prays that fever may visit the Gandharis, Mujavants, the Angas and Magadhas.

The reliability of the two epics and *Puranas* are not beyond

question. If one believes in them, long before the above-mentioned Dirghatamas, Anga had come in contact with the Aryans. Similarly, five *Puranas* and the *Ramayana* refer to as many as 53 kings, including Nimi,²² the founder of the dynasty of Videha, who flourished before the battle of Kurukshetra. The *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*, particularly the *Markandeya*, have been utilized for the reconstruction of history of Vaisali till the advent of Gautama Buddha. The Buddhist and Jaina texts do not at all refer to such early history of these two ancient kingdoms. Further, archaeological evidence does not show that there was human habitation in Vaisali before the seventh century B.C.

The literary sources for the study of history of Bihar in between the sixth century B.C. and the foundation of the Maurya dynasty, is plentiful, but not free from doubts. The political, administrative and socio-economic history of the Lichchavis is mostly known from a large number of Buddhist texts and passing references in Jaina texts. Practically nothing is known from Brahmanical literature. But when one considers the date of these texts, it becomes difficult to determine which particular developments in a decade or a number of decades occurred in Vaisali. Whereas the *Digha Nikaya* and the *Vinaya Pitaka* were compiled in the first century B.C., the *Dipavamsa* and *Mahavamsa* in the fifth century A.D. The *Chivaravastu*, which refers to Vaisali in detail, was a work of the Gupta times. No scholar has as yet been able to determine the strata of the *Jatakas*. The *Bhagavati Sutra*, which refers to the war between Ajatasatru and Vaisali in full length, was finally compiled in the sixth century A.D. Further, the Buddhist texts do not mention the role of Chetaka.

A few details of the history of the Nanda dynasty are known from indigenous and foreign sources. The *Puranas* contain more references to them than other texts. But all the *Puranas* at times do not give one version of the reign periods, and not even in regard to Mahapadma Nanda. Again whereas the *Puranas* describe Mahapadma as born of a Sudra mother, the *Parisishtaparvan* (p. 46), and Curtius as the son of a barber. Curtius, Diodorus and Plutarch differ about the strength of the

last Nanda King Agrammes. But unanimous are the informations on the wealth of Nandas, as known from varied sources like the *Mahavamsa*, the *Kathasaritsagara*, the *Mudrarakshasa* and account of Hiuen Tsang. The introduction of a new measure is known only from a rule cited by S. C. Vasu while translating *Ashtadhyayi* II 4.21 of Panini.

The sources of the history of Maurya period are well known. Identical information about the Maurya rulers is seldom found in these texts. The Hindu, Jaina and Buddhist literature differ on the caste of Chandragupta Maurya. But scholars are inclined to believe in the version of the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, the *Divyavadana* and the *Mahavamsa* written by the Buddhists, as correct and hence Mauryas were Kshatriyas. The Puranas like the *Vayu*, *Matsya*, *Vishnu* differ on the names of successors of Asoka. The tragic death of the last Maurya, Brihadratha, is recorded only in the *Harshacharita*. However, the account of Megasthenes regarding the administration and description of Pataliputra is much valuable. A few comments may be made on the utility of the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya. It neither mentions Pataliputra nor the empire of the Mauryas. All the chapters in the extant edition can hardly be ascribed to the Maurya period. Yet some of the passages of the *Arthashastra* on administration are similar to the account of Megasthenes, as for example, the varied functions of magistrates. If the classical writers' quotations from the account of Megasthenes are accepted as true, Megasthenes incorporated many myths and committed many mistakes while depicting the social divisions in India.

There are very few original books which relate to the history of the period between c. 187 B.C. and 1206 A.D. None of these is a comprehensive history of any dynasty ruling in Bihar. Kalidasa's *Raghuvamsum* and the *Malavikagnimitram*, Banabhatta's *Harshacharita*, the *Manjusrimulakalpa*, etc. refer casually to events relating to Bihar. The *Mudrarakshasa* of Visakhadatta dramatises the overthrow of the Nandas. The accounts of foreign writers like Fa-Hien, Hiuen Tsang, I-tsing and Taranatha are more helpful for the socio-religious history of Bihar. It is only from the Chinese travellers, mentioned above, that we are able to get a very good account of Nalanda University, about which the con-

temporary Hindu and Jaina authors are completely silent. Taranatha's *History of Buddhism in India*, written in 1608 A.D., is very useful for the history of Buddhist doctrines, educational institutions and teachers therein. One gets an idea of Buddhist Tantricism, which was not touched upon by Hiuen Tsang and I-Tsing. Relying on tradition, he narrates the political activities of the rulers of Bengal. As traditions are not entirely reliable, his work is not accepted by modern scholars as true history on all occasions. The rule of Chandra kings over Tirhut is not corroborated by any other source. He wove a myth on the origin of the Pala dynasty. Similarly the epigraphic data shows that the order of succession of Pala kings by this Tibetan Lama is wrong. In contrast, it may be pointed out that Sandhyakaranandi's *Ramacharita* is extremely valuable for the role of chiefs of South Bihar, particularly Mathana (or Mahana) of Anga, Bhimayasa of Pithi and lord of Magadha, who helped Ramapala in recovering Varendri.

Some scholars are inclined to utilize books like the *Krishiparasara* (written in the eleventh century) and a *Buddha Gana O'Doha* and *Dohakosa* for agrarian and socio-religious history of Bihar respectively. Neither of these texts mentions the areas of their respective themes. But, except in a few matters, the information about agriculture as given in the former book can be true of Bihar. The same remark is applicable to the latter work also.

V

Almost all the original source-materials have been utilised by scholars. By the third decade of the present century nearly all the sources relating to the life and time of the Buddha had been tapped. Due to few excavations, the materials buried under the earth could not be utilized by historians who had completed their works by about 1940. Thereafter, and particularly after 1950, as more sites have been discovered, more of coins, terracottas, metallic images, and remains of ancient buildings have helped the historians to present a better history. Discovery of new inscrip-

tions has led to rewriting of political as well as social history of Bihar. Further, in recent years scientists have been taking interest in history. Consequently, the chemical composition of some of the materials of Chirand, the bronzes of Nalanda and a few glass objects has been analysed. The materials used for painting on illustrated manuscripts have been discussed by only one scholar. In the field of literature the discovery of the Gilgit manuscripts has also yielded some good results.

In regard to the discovery and systematic utilization of the sources of history of ancient Bihar, special mention should be made of K. P. Jayaswal, R. C. Majumdar, A. S. Altekar, D. C. Sircar, B. P. Sinha and R. S. Sharma. K. P. Jayaswal wrote numerous articles on Bihar and edited the second volume of the *Descriptive Catalogue of Manuscripts in Mithila*. R. C. Majumdar utilised latest materials in his *History of Ancient Bengal* (1971). A. S. Altekar was the first among teachers of Bihar to undertake the excavations of Kumrahar and Vaisali. D. C. Sircar has not only discovered and edited the largest number of inscriptions in Bihar, but also corrected this State's political and socio-economic history. The credit of popularizing pre- and proto-history of Bihar as well as Bihar's contribution to art goes to B. P. Sinha. A proper perspective of social and economic history in the Gupta and post-Gupta ages has been made for the first time by R. S. Sharma. Radha Krishna Chaudhary's efforts are praiseworthy. Without any cooperative effort, he himself compiled the *History of Bihar and Select Inscriptions of Bihar*. Upendra Thakur presented a comprehensive *History of Mithila*. The contributions of A. K. Coomaraswamy, R. D. Banerji, J. C. French, Stella Kramrisch, Niharranjan Ray, Devaprasad Ghosh and S. K. Saraswati have enabled us to reconstruct the history of art and architecture of Bihar and alliedly of Bengal of ancient and early medieval times. B. B. Lal²³ has done commendable work in the sphere of glass, beads and bronzes.

As there is no end to knowledge, so also there still remains scope for utilization of source-materials. Among the literary sources, known to us, the *Divyavadana* and *Chivaravastu* have to be read more minutely. Scholars should not only search for

materials in the published works *Dharmakirti*, *Jnanasrimitra* and *Ratnakirti*, but also of other unpublished manuscripts which were brought by Rahul Sankrityayana from Tibet and now preserved in the Bihar Research Society. In order to know more of the tribal people, it is necessary to record their traditional songs and stories and then analyse them. As yet no scholar has made an attempt to compile the history of the Cheros.

Comprehensive and comparative studies on various aspects of history of ancient Bihar should now be the objective of historians. A complete picture of pre- and proto-history of Bihar and its peculiarities in the context of other sites, which are beyond the borders of Bihar, should be drawn. Similarly, the evolution of architecture of temples and monasteries, stone and bronze sculptures may be undertaken by historians. Scientists-cum-historians should come forward to make chemical analysis of all the bronze images, seals, glass objects found in Bihar. In these new fields of investigation, one must point out not only the continuity and marked changes in technology but also account for the changes.

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- ² Sinha, B. P., *Bhratiya Kala Ko Bihar Ki Dana*, p. 142, *Archaeological Survey of India*, XV, pp. 34-35.
- ^{2a} Some scholars, however, regard both these places, at least, the latter one, as genuine. See *Indian Culture*, XI, pp. 225-30. —Editor
- ³ *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* (henceforth *CII*), III, 49(f) (Fleet), D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscription* (2nd Edn.), p. 325f, Silver Jubilee Souvenir, Department of Ancient Indian History and Archaeology, Patna University, p. 11.
- ^{3a} Kalyan Kumar Dasgupta suggests that this Siva or Sucha may be identical with *Sura* of the *Manjusrimulakalpa*. See *Indian Historical Quarterly*, XXXVIII. —Editor.

- ⁴ *Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society* (hereinafter *JBORS*).
- ⁵ *Indian Antiquary* (hereinafter *IA*), XV, 309 (Kaksha), line 29 ; *Epigraphia India* (hereinforth *EI*), XXIX, p. 55, line 25 (Hodreya). R. S. Sharma suggests that Handreya may be identical with Hardi village in modern Saharsa district (*Comprehensive History of Bihar*, I, pp. II, p. 340).
- ⁶ *EI*, XXIII, p. 291, text lines 5-7.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, XXXV, p. 134, line 16.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 132.
- ⁹ *JBORS*, II, 444 ; *EI*, VII, 100, line 37.
- ¹⁰ *EI*, XXXVI ; *Gaudalekhamala* (ed.), A. K. Maitreya, p. 115.
- ¹¹ *Memoir of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, V, 178 ; *EI*, XXXVI, 86ff.
- ¹² For details vide *Comprehensive History of Bihar*, I, pt. II, pp. 403-23 by the author.
- ¹³ *EI*, XXVIII, p. 145.
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- ¹⁵ *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, XLI (1955), p. 153.
- ¹⁶ *IA*, XVI-65, cf. D. C. Sircar's Translation of Verse 3 of the inscr. in *EI*, XXXVI, p. 82.
- ¹⁷ *Silver Jubilee Souvenir* (1978) of Ancient Indian History and Archaeology, Patna University.
- ¹⁸ For example, Gaouri Pl (second set), VS 1043 (*EI*, XXIII, 113), Singhara pl. of Ranabhanja (*JBORS*, VI, 494), Maranja Mura pl. of Mahasivagupta I, yr. 3 (*Ibid.*, II, 54), Benares pl. of Karna, c 1042 AD (*CH*, IV, 238, 244), pls. of Madanavarman and Paramardi Chandella dated 1136, 1182 and 1191 A.D. respectively (*EI*, XXXII, 122, 125, 127), Bangavan pl. of Govindachandra Gahadavala dated c 1150-51 A.D. (*Ibid.*, V 118).
- ¹⁹ I am indebted to Mr. K. K. Sharma, Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Bihar, for the information that one inscribed gold coin of Huvishka has been found at Katra recently.
- ²⁰ *Comprehensive History of Bihar*, Vol. I, pt. II, p. 615.
- ²¹ For discussion on it by P. L. Gupta, *ibid.*, pt. II, p. 620.
- ²² Cf. *Ibid.*, I, ch. VIII.
- ²³ *Ancient India*, no. 8 (1952), p. 24 ; *ibid.*, no. 12 (1956), p. 53f.

EPIGRAPHIC SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT BIHAR

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ADMITTEDLY it is entirely from a patient examination of the inscriptions that our knowledge of ancient Bihar has been derived. These epigraphic records provide material for what we know about Bihar and offer valuable information for the construction of political and cultural history of this glorious state. The great importance of the inscriptions lies in the fact that they furnish information about things which are not known to us from other sources. Nowhere else has the epigraphic record served history so well as it has done here in Bihar. They are found engraved on all sorts of objects like stone, metal and clay. These records may be broadly classified into two—(i) those engraved by and on behalf of the ruling authority, and (ii) those engraved on behalf of private individuals or organizations. Eulogistic compositions are known as *prasastis*. We have donative, commemorative and eulogistic inscriptions. The Bihar inscriptions show that different eras were simultaneously used, e.g., Vikrama, Saka, Gupta, Harsha, etc. Kings have also used regnal years in the inscriptions.

One of the unresolved problems of the epigraphy in Bihar is the fragmentary stone inscription from Maksudpur estate in the district of Gaya. It is in the Armaic character and yet undeciphered. The Saisunaka inscribed pre-Mauryan inscription is perhaps the oldest epigraphic record¹ of the State. The inscriptions in shell character at Rajgir (of course pre-Mauryan)^{1a} have baffled the epigraphists so far. Besides these a number of important inscriptions belong to the period of Asoka written in Brahmi character and Prakrit language. They have

been found at Lauriya-Araraj, Lauriya-Nandangarh, Rampurva, and on rock at Sasaram. We have a few inscriptions of his successors in the Barabar Hills which show that the Ajivikas of Magadha received special favour from the later Mauryas. It should be borne in mind that the Mauryan period ushered in the inscriptional era of India. The language spoken in Magadha obtained recognition all over the country and by the time of Asoka, the dialect must have been understood over greater part of India. The spirit of toleration and liberalism is also discernible through the ages in the Mauryan inscriptions.

In the post-Mauryan period, very few inscriptions have been noticed in Bihar and one of them is the Yogimara Cave inscription² of the third century B.C. A few inscriptions have been found in the railings of Bodh-Gaya. Five brick inscriptions at Gopalpur (Saran) containing Buddhist *sutras* have also been noticed.³ The Hasanpur Stone vessel Inscription dated Saka 108 (=A.D. 186) from the district of Patna gives us an idea about a King of the Mitra dynasty named Visakhmitra.⁴ An inscribed sandstone Bodhisattva image inscription dated in the year 64 of Maharaj Trikamalla is palaeographically placed in the second-third century A.D.⁵ We have yet another inscribed seal of Saka Mahadevi, Prabhudama from Vaisali, belonging to the third century A.D. A few seals at Kumrahar are also useful for the religious history of the pre-Gupta period.

Many inscriptions, discovered outside the geographical limit of modern Bihar, also throw welcome light on the problems of Bihar history or personalities. Chronological representation of events is found in the Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela (of Kalinga) who invaded Bihar twice. It refers to the sack of Rajgir, defeat of Bahastimitra and the shifting of the image of Jaina Tirthankara and also a good amount of wealth from Anga and Magadha. We learn from the Junagadh rock Inscription of Rudradaman (c. A.D. 150) that Sudarsana lake was created by Rastriya Pushyagupta during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya and that Yavanaraja Tusashpa endowed it with irrigation canals on behalf of Asoka. The Mahasthan Bogra inscription refers to the famine conditions during the Mauryan period in the region of Pundravardhan. The Mauryan rulers took great interest in



removing peoples' distress. This inscription refers to the famine relief measures such as distribution of grains from state granaries and advance of loan to the people. A king of Ceylon was permitted by Samudragupta to erect rest-houses at Bodh Gaya for the Buddhists.

The Basarh seals (of the Gupta period) refer to corporate activity and various officials and ministers of different grades. They provide us with ample information regarding the municipal administration as well as economic organization of ancient Bihar. The Department of Military Finance was separated from Civil Finance. There is the total absence of any distinct symbol of Buddhism on these seals. A unique seal from Kumrahar has revealed the existence of a monastery-cum-hospital at Pataliputra and another at Naulagarh⁷ proves the existence of a *vishaya* over there. The Bihar stone inscription of Skandagupta tells of the then administrative and economic conditions. It speaks of Samudragupta as having performed the Asvamedha and further refers to the erection of a *yupa* (sacrificial pillar) throwing light on the Saiva form of worship in its *Sakta* or *Tantric* development. Skandagupta seems to have greatly endeared himself to the people of Magadha.

The two spurious plates of Samudragupta can be used for the study of land system in the post-Gupta period. The Nalanda and Gaya spurious plates of Samudragupta are identical and are likely to have been copied from some genuine plates. Mention must be made of the large variety of gold and silver coins belonging to the Gupta period. The legends on the coins greatly help us by providing important clues for the reconstruction of their history. They also confirm and supplement the information which we get from epigraphic and literary sources.

The real epigraphic source for the study of the history of Bihar begins from the rise of the Guptas onwards. Stone, metal and clay inscriptions are found in abundance and the following details would show the magnitude of their importance. Stone includes rock surface, wall of natural and artificial caves, pavements, pillars, slabs, statutes, etc. The Mandar Hill inscription of Adityasena,⁸ Kalua Hill Inscription of Vishnugupta,⁹ Kaulesvari

Hill Inscription of Vishnugupta,¹⁰ Dudhapani Rock Inscription of Udayamana¹¹ [The *Manas* of this inscription are never heard again till after about three centuries when the Govindpur inscription associates them with Gaya. The *Manas* were on friendly terms with the Palas after having settled their scores with each other. The Dudhapani inscription illustrates means by which quasi-feudal system arose], Nagarjuni and Barabar Cave Hill inscriptions of Anantavarman,¹² the Tarachandi Rock Inscription of Pratapadharva¹³ and the Silsila rock Inscription of Vimurti¹⁴ are examples of rock and hill Cave inscriptions. Examples of Stone pillar inscriptions include Bihar Pillar Inscription of Skandagupta,¹⁵ Deo-Baranark Pillar Inscription of Jivitagupta¹⁶ and Nalanda Pillar Inscription of the reign of Rajyapala.¹⁷ The stone Inscriptions include Nalanda Stone Inscription of Yasovarman,¹⁸ Bodh-Gaya Inscriptions of Mahanaman,¹⁹ Apsad Stone Inscription of Adityasena,²⁰ Mangraon Stone Inscription of Vishnugupta,²¹ inscriptions of Dharmapala,²² Gopala II²³ and Mahipala I,²⁴ Ghosrawan Inscription of Devapala,²⁵ Gaya Stone Inscription of Govindapala,²⁶ Govindapur Stone Inscriptions of poet Gangadhar²⁷ and Antichak Inscription of Masanikesa.²⁸

Copperplate inscriptions discovered in Bihar include spurious Nalanda and Gaya CPs of Samudragupta,²⁹ Nandpur CP,³⁰ Nalanda CP of Dharmapala, Monghyr CP of Devapala, Nalanda CP of Devapala, Bhagalpur CP of Narayanapala, Bangaon CP of Vigrahapala III,³¹ Amauna CP of Maharaja Nandana,³² Dighwa Dubauli CP, Katragarh CP of Ramgupta, Maner CP of Govinda Chandra³³ and Panchobh Copperplate of Samgramgupta. An inscribed brick of Nalanda³⁴ (c. 6th century A.D.) is unique of its kind and the text therein is of *Nidanasutra*. An inscribed terracotta plaque from Begusarai³⁵ has two scripts on two sides—Gupta and Maithili. It is dated in the 67th year of an unspecified era. If assigned to the Lakshmana Samvat it may be reckoned as one of the earliest known records of that era.

The post-Gupta and Pala inscriptions are of three kinds—represented by records on seals, e.g., the seals of Vaisali represent mostly the symbols of authority of various officials and guilds existing in the towns—Vaisali in those days was the headquarters

of Tirabhukti. A seal from Kumrahar refers to the existence of *Arogyavihara* (hospital-cum-monastery) at Pataliputra to which a reference is also made by Fa-hien. The Nalanda seals mark the visit of dignitaries and are useful for the study for political and administrative history. The seals of Avantivarman and his successors give the Maukhari genealogy and that of Harsha his family tree while the seals issued by various Janapadas give us an idea of the political organization of the period. Several Pala land-grant charters have been found in the districts of Saharsa, Bhagalpur, Monghyr, Patna and these charters record the names of about two dozen officials to whom they are addressed. They enumerate items of revenue to be collected from the countryside and indicate various kinds of rural resources. They also mention the original home of the beneficiaries, their *gotras* and *pravaras* which indicate the position of the brahmanas. The Gahadavala and Pratihara copperplates throw welcome sidelights on the economic and administrative organization. It may be mentioned here that till recently we knew that there was only one *visaya*, namely, *Kaksavisaya* in Tirabhukti from the Bhagalpur copperplate of Narayanpala. With the discovery of the Katra CP of Ramgupta it has come to light that there was one *Chamunda-Visaya* in Tirabhukti, the Naulagarh and Bangaon CP inscriptions of Vignarhapala III refer to the existence of *Krimila-Visaya* and *Hodreya-Visaya*, respectively in Tirabhukti. The Dighwa-Dubauli plate tells us something about the fiscal system while the Maner CP describes revenue organisation and mentions *Turuska-danda*. From the political and administrative point of view, the Panchobh CP inscription of Samgramgupta is one of the most important records of Bihar to which we shall revert later.

Inscriptions from neighbouring areas throw welcome light and provide valuable information about Bihar. Several inscriptions from Orissa between A.D. 600 and 1200 speak of the brahmanas who went from Tirabhukti to that area as pioneers, landholders and civilizers. One refers to Tunga ruler from Rohtas and some refer to brahmanas hailing from Pataliputra. Similarly, Anga finds mention in the Belwa CP of Bhojavarman,³⁶ Rewal Stone Inscription,³⁷ Sarnath Inscription³⁸ of

Kumaradevi, Nilgunda Stone Inscription of Amoghavarsha,³⁹ and Deoli grant of Krishna III. The Chandella King, Yasovarman, (tenth century A.D.), a feudatory of the Gurjara Pratihara, is described in a Khajuraho inscription as subduer of Gauds, Khasas, Kosalas, Kashmiras, Maithilas, Malavas, Chedis, Kurus and Gurjaras. It is more a rhetoric than a statement of facts as Kosala, Mithila and Kuru did not exist as separate states in those days. In Nagpur *prasasti* of Parmara Lakshmanavarman (1087-97), he is represented as a conqueror of Gauda, Anga and Kalinga—a vague claim indeed.

The Maukhari inscriptions throw light on the contemporary history of Bihar. If the Varma officer mentioned in the Bihar inscription of Skandagupta was a chieftain belonging to the Maukhari community, it would appear that they ultimately succeeded as a sovereign power in the recovery of the province with which they had been formerly associated. The Deo-Baranark inscription and the Nalanda seals confirm the Maukhari authority in Magadha. The Maukhari inscriptions present florid characters of the northern alphabet and exhibit very markedly the fully developed *matras*. A distinct stage can be seen in the development of North Indian alphabet.⁴⁰

The rise of the Maukharis coincided with the fall of the Imperial Guptas. The imperial Guptas were forced to retreat giving place to the Maukharis who were steadily but surely building up an empire. A samanta under the Imperial Guptas, the founder of the line ultimately became the master. Sardula has been described as *samanta-chudamani*. The Maukharis ruled for half a century in Magadha. Seals of Sasanka, Bhaskaravarman and Harsha are equally important. Sasanka is called a *Mahasa-manta* in Rohtas seal. The Nalanda seals of Bhaskaravarman and Harsha disclose the genealogy of those two rulers. All of them enjoyed some sort of political authority in Bihar. All of them were contemporaries. The Nalanda inscription of Yasovarmadeva speaks of the magnificence of Nalanda as described by Hiuen Tsang.

The Later Guptas ruled over a large part of Bihar for nearly a century and the Later Gupta inscriptions are important for a

critical study of the political and economic history of the then Bihar. The Apsad Stone inscription of Adityasena besides being important from historical point of view, can also be ranked as one of the best *kaziyas*. This inscription traces its history from the very beginning. Adityasena is described as a powerful King and destroyer of his enemies in all his inscriptions discovered from Bihar. The Apsad inscription is sectarian—its principal object being to record the building of a temple of Vishnu, of a religious monastery by his mother and the excavation of a tank by his wife. The historical information consists of the genealogy of the Later Gupta family of Magadha. The undisputed sovereignty of the Later Guptas over the whole of Bihar is proved by a number of inscriptions spread over different parts of the State. Adityasena is said to have performed the Asvamedha and built a temple costing lacs of rupees. The Shahpur inscription records the foundation of an image at Nalanda in the year 66 of an unspecified era. His inscriptions have been noticed at Mandar and Deoghar. The revival of the Gupta sovereignty was his greatest achievement. He was followed by Devagupta, Vishnugupta and Jivitagupta. The Deo-Baranark inscription of Jivitagupta II mentions four kings belonging to the last line of the Later Guptas and also mentions one Baladitya II of the Later Imperial Gupta line. This charter was issued from Gomatikottaka. This dynasty was overthrown by Yasovarman of Kanauj. Their rule extended up to the Chotanagpur area.

About the middle of the eighth century A.D., the Palas established their sway over Bihar and founded a large empire. Their inscriptions have been found all over Bihar. Though devout Buddhists, the Pala rulers were tolerant to other sects. A study of the Pala inscriptions reveals that their official seal bore the emblem of *Dharmachakra*. The private individuals invoked the gods and spirits of their own liking. The earliest Pala inscription from Bihar is the Nalanda inscription of Dharmapala, the real founder of the line. The Kurkihar bronze images constitute the single largest group of their kind extant and they offer a unique opportunity of studying the Buddhist pantheon through the moulders' art in four successive centuries

(eighth—twelfth centuries A.D.). A very long list of officials and non-officials is found in the Pala inscriptions—

(i) Rajan (subordinate King), (ii) Rajanyaka (subordinate chief), (iii) Rajaputra (noblemen), (iv) Rajamatya (minister or executive officer), (v) Mahasandhivigrahika (minister for peace and war), (vi) Mahaksapatalika (accountant and record-keeper), (vii) Mahasamanta (feudatory), (viii) Mahasenapati (General), (ix) Mahapratihara (Officer-in-charge of palace gates), (x) Mahakartakritika (?), (xi) Dausadhnika (Emergency Officer), (xii) Mahadandanayaka (Commander), (xiii) Mahakumaramatya (Minister of the rank of a prince of the royal blood), (xiv) Rajasthanoparika (Viceroy), (xv) Dasaparadhika (Police Magistrate), (xvi) Chauroldharnika (Prefect of the police), (xvii) Dandika-Dandapasika (Police Officers), (xviii) Saulkika (Customs officer), (xix) Gaulmika (Officer-in-charge of Police Station), (xx) Kshetrapa (Officer-in-charge of the royal lands), (xxi) Prantpala (Warden of the marches), (xxii) Kottapala (Governor of a fort), (xxiii) Khandaraksha or Angaraksha, and other officers-in-charge of elephants, horses, camels, navy, army; those in-charge of fowls, mares, buffaloes, goats, sheep, etc.; *Duta*, *Prehasnika*, *Chata*, *Bhata*, and other servants of such nationalities as Gauda, Malava, Khasa, Huna, Kulika, Karnata, Lata, and other non-mentioned subjects and servants of the King.⁴¹ The Bhagalpur CP of Narayanapala gives unusually the longest list of officials.

The Nalanda copperplate of Devapala records that the King at the request of illustrious Balaputradeva, ruler of Suvarnadvipa, granted five villages for the comforts of the *Bhikshus* of Sumatra and for the upkeep of the monastery at Nalanda. The Ghosrawan Stone inscription contains an account of Viradeva of the Nalanda University. The Bangaon CP inscription of Vighrahapala III⁴² is considerably important for the history of the Palas. It adds a new name to the list of Pala *jayaskandhavaras* (camps of victory), viz., Kanchanapura yet unknown from any Pala record. It also gives the name of a new Vishaya in Tirabhukti, viz., Hodreya. It throws light on the social history too. It purports to record the grant of a village by the Pala

King in favour of a brahmana but at the end it is said that the grant was made by an officer out of his own Jagir.

The Pala inscriptions supply us with a large number of place names and a study of the ancient historical geography of Bihar can be attempted. The question of the capital of the Palas is yet unsettled and we have a number of references to various *jayaskandhavaras* in the Pala inscriptions. The interest of the Pala kings lay more in Magadha. The official royal grant, Khalimpur CP of Dharmapala, was issued from Pataliputra, the Monghyr, Nalanda CPs of Devapala and Bhagalpur CP of Narayanapala were issued from Monghyr and Bangaon CP from Kanchanapura. In the beginning Monghyr and Pataliputra served as capitals of the Palas but later when they lost their hold in south Bihar they shifted to North Bihar and made Kanchanapura as one of their temporary capitals. The various *garhs* (mounds) like Alavligarh, Naulagarh, Jaimanglagarh, Mangalgarh, etc. suggest that these were the administrative-cum-military centres of the Palas in north Bihar. The Palas founded great Buddhist monasteries of Odantpur and Vikramasila and were patrons of the famous monastery at Nalanda. In the eleventh century Bihar became a bone of contention between the Palas and the Kalachuris, although the latter were ultimately overpowered and driven out. The Palas ultimately became confined to the southern district of Bihar.

The Govindpur inscription of poet Gangadhara (*EI*, III, pp. 330-42) associates the Manas with Gaya—a rival of Yakshapala. The Manas are known to us from the Dudhapani rock inscription of the district of Hazaribagh (c. eighth century A.D.) and were heard again after three hundred years in Gaya. Rudramana is credited with having recovered his realm. They possibly came into conflict with Yakshapala but later became friendly with the Palas. The Palas by that time had become sufficiently weak and it appears that the Manas took advantage of their weakness and re-established their authority in the region of Gaya.

The Pratiharas held sway over a portion of Bihar and that is evident from their inscriptions, which throw light on the extent of their empire in this state. The Dighwa-Dubouli CP, the Ramgaya and Itkhori and other inscriptions are indicative of the fact

that they were a factor to be reckoned with. Slowly the Palas lost their dominions in Bengal to the Senas and became confined to a limited space in south Bihar.⁴³ The Senas were encroaching upon the eastern part of their truncated kingdom. The Sanokhar inscription of Ballalasena is important because it gives for the first time a definite evidence in favour of Ballalasena's rule over east Bihar. The Gahadavalas of U.P. were encroaching upon the western part of the Pala empire and Mithila or North Bihar was already under the Karnatas as is evident from the Andharatharhi inscription of Sridharadasa. The Palas were maintaining a precarious existence. The Gahadavalas extended their sway up to Bihar and controlled a major portion of Anga and Magadha. They also issued charters and grants in Bihar. The Maner *CP* refers to *Turushkadanda*. The Lar plates (1146) prove that the Gahadavala King was staying at Mudgagiri. The Bodh-Gaya inscription of Jayachandra suggests that the Palas were driven out of Gaya and Shivahar plate further confirms Jayachandra's authority in the district of Patna.⁴⁴ The *Turushkadanda* in Gahadavala inscription might have been a tax levied on the Muhammadans or for the maintenance of special forces for defending subjects from Muhammadan attacks.

Sometimes the titles used by subordinate rulers are found to be an admixture of both imperial and feudatory titles or an ambiguous admixture of the two elements. This indicates their newly achieved semi-independent status and the Panchobh *CP* of Samgramagupta is a case in point.⁴⁵ The kings of the inscription were Saiva and the record mentions *Guptavamsa* as referring to the dynasty to which the King belonged. This epigraph is of great importance for the study of political and administrative history of Bihar. Samgramagupta maintained an independent administrative machinery consisting of about two dozen officials, many of them with the flamboyant designations beginning with *Maha*. These officials were :

(i) Patra (Aviser), (ii) Mahavyuhapati (the commander of military arrays), (iii) Mahadhikarika (the chief executive officer), (iv) Mahamudradhikari (the keeper of the royal

seal), (v) Mahamattaka (the head of the elders or nobles), (vi) Mahapilupati (the commander of elephant corps), (vii) Mahasadhanika (the chief officer dealing with criminals), (viii) Mahaksapatalika (the chief accountant), (ix) Mahapratihara (the palace guard), (x) Mahadharmadhikarnika (the chief justice), (xi) Mahakaranadhyaksa (the chief scribe), (xii) Vartti (the Intelligence officer=*Vartininai bandhika*), (xiii) Naibandhika (the writer of grants or the Law Adviser), (xiv) Mahakatuka (?). (xv) Mahauthika (?) or Mahauthitasanika, (xvi) Tasanika (?), (xvii) Mahadandanayaka (the chief judicial magistrate), (xviii) Mahadanika (the chief endowment officer), (xix) Mahapanchakulika (the superintendent of Local Councils of Five), (xx) Mahasresthidanika (the supervisor of the religious gifts made by merchants), (xxi) Mahasamanataranaka (head of the feudal vassals), (xxii) Bhulidanika (the supervisor of the guilds of cultivated land), (xxiii) Ghattapala (the keeper of mountain-passes), (xxiv) Khandapala (the protector of old buildings and forts), (xxv) Narapati (Captain of the infantry), (xxvi) Gulmapati (Captain of local garrisons), (xxvii) Naubala-vyaprata (the head of the Navy), (xxviii) Gau-Mahisi-Vidvadyaksha (Superintendent of the cattle, buffaloes, etc.), (xxix) Rajaputra (Prince).

All these titles are too pretentious to satisfy their sense of prestige and vanity in a feudal atmosphere. Samgramagupta himself was a *Mahamandalika* but these designations in the inscriptions are more high-sounding than those of the Palas. The epigraph throws light on the growing importance of the landed feudal elements in day-to-day administration. The offices of *Mahapanchakulika* and *Mahasresthidanika* might suggest the association of urban and mercantile interest with administration which was reinforced by the presence of *Rajaputra* (prince) and *Mahasamantaranaka* (head of the feudal vassals). *Mahakarnadhyaksha*, *Mahadanika*, *Mahapanchakulika*, *Mahasresthidanika*, *Bhulidanika* and *Mahasamantaranaka* are not found under the Palas and Senas; whereas *Dharmadhikarin*, *Mahamattaka* and *Pratibala-Karnadhyaksha* are mentioned in the *Varanaratnakara* of Jyotirishvar Thakur. It is a further proof of the fact that

Samgramagupta was a *Mahamandalika* in Mithila whose administrative designations were adopted by a Maithila Encyclopaedist. It may be further noted that the Pala charters begin by informing the functionaries and then seek their assent (*I' iditamastu*), but in the Panchobh copperplate we see that the official's opinion counted much because it begins by seeking the consent of officers (*Matamastu*). It is evident that Samgramagupta had to depend on his subordinates and it is indicative of the growing power of the feudal nobles. Various kinds of forcible labour were imposed and the system of taxation was harsh. The expression *Samantapida-uparikara* is not found in the Pala record.

The bull couchant is confirmed by the epithet *I' rishava-dhruja*. It records the grant of a village to a brahmana hailing from Kolancha. Samgramagupta was a Saiva and descended from the Gupta dynasty of which the earliest founder was Arjuna. There is a reference to Chamunda-*vishaya* in Tirabhukti in the Katra copperplate. Line 20 of the Panchobh copperplate refers to one Chamundaraja (possibly Damodargupta, also called *Amarapurinathadeva* in Line 21) and as such there seems to be some truth in the statement that the two rulers of the two plates were in one way or the other connected with each other, though there is a time-lag between the two. Both the Bangaon copperplate and the Panchobh copperplate grants refer to brahmanas hailing from Kolancha. It would be profitable if some one takes up this interesting problem of epigraphy, viz., the study of inscriptions recording grants of villages to brahmanas simply to ascertain time and manner in which the various *gotras* of brahmanas and *sakhas* of the Vedas spread over different parts of Bihar. This important aspect of social history is yet a desideratum in the realm of epigraphic studies in Bihar. Inscriptions give us clue to the expansion of various Vedic *sakhas*, *gotras* and *pravaras*.

The Antichak stone pillar inscription of Masanikesa refers to a general named Sonadaman sent by the lord of Vanga at the head of a large fleet of boats in order to subdue Sahura who consequently defeated Sonadamana. It indirectly refers to a conflict between the Palas (Madanapala, A.D. 1143-1161) and the Senas (Vijayasena and Ballalasena, whose inscription has

been noticed from Sanokhar, not very far from Antichak). The inscription exhibits considerable Brahmanical influence. The Bodh-Gaya Stone Slab inscription of Buddhasena⁴⁶ (in the Berlin Museum) states that the grant was issued from the illustrious Vikramapataka by Pithipati Acharya Buddhasena dated in Lakshmana Samvat 83. Dharmasvamin, the Tibetan traveller, met him in 1234-35. *Pitha* here refers to Vajrasana or Bodh-Gaya. That Buddhasena claimed to be the lord of Magadha even after the Muslim conquest of Bihar is suggested by Dharmasvamin. The Pithapatis ruled from Bodh-Gaya. Inhabitants of the donated land are advised to become submissive to the donee and to pay him proper dues and to live happily and cultivate their plots of land. It also refers to official titles like *Sadhanika-Ranak*, *Mandalika* and *Pandita*.

The Khojpur Durga Image Inscription (Lakshmana Samvat 147=1255 A.D.) refers to an official designation viz., *Mandavika* (possibly a collector of tolls). The date recorded here is of considerable interest, since it is given in the La-Sam, i.e., Lakshmana Samvat, prevalent in Mithila and is one of the earliest recorded dates in that era coming from Mithila. The current practice of counting the beginning of the era from A.D. 1108, is supported by this inscription and another internal evidence when L.S. 620=1651 Saka=1136 Sal=A.D. 1729-30⁴⁷ La-Sam is associated with the *atitaraajye* (past sovereignty) of Lakshmanasena started in the Gaya region. The commencement of the era, synchronizing with Lakshmanasena's accession in 1179, seems to have been later confused with the day of the King's birth, about which people's ideas were probably characterized by confusion owing to the absence of unanimous tradition.⁴⁸

The Biharshariff Stone Slab inscription (Saka 1317=A.D. 1396) is of considerable importance from the cultural point of view.⁴⁹ It records the construction of a *kirtti* (a structure or a temple) to house the deity Kausika-naga by a number of persons. The Naga worship was very popular in this area since the days of the *Mahabharata*. A Rajgir seal from Nalanda contains two Naga figures with snake-hoods at their back and it clearly indicates the worship of snakes in those parts. The Rajgir folklore is rich with tradition about Yaksha and Naga. The

Mahabharata informs us that Maninaga and Svastikanaga were twin Naga divinities. Maniyarmatha excavations have proved the existence of the snake cult worship in that area.⁵⁰ The contribution of the tradition of the snake-worship up to the fourteenth century A.D. in that area is of considerable interest to the students of India's cultural history. It was one of the great centres of the Naga cult in eastern India. One Kayastha Peteswara composed the stanza of this inscription.

There are various problems indicated by the inscriptions of Bihar which await further study. The system of land-grant, the question of the ownership of land, a study of feudalism in all its aspects and aspects of socio-economic and cultural history on scientific lines are yet a desideratum. The entire administrative set-up of ancient Bihar can be studied on the basis of inscriptions. The two important *bhuktis* known to us from inscriptions are Srinagarbhukti and Tirabhukti. We have also names of various other *bhuktis* and *vishayas* from inscriptions of Bihar or from inscriptions in areas bordering on Bihar. Important *vishayas* were Gaya, Rajgir, Krimila, Kaksha, Chamunda, Hodrey, etc. We can also reconstruct the historical geography of Bihar on the basis of inscriptions. Topographical matters are not lacking in the inscriptions. Names of villages, *vithis*, *patakas*, *vishayas*, *bhuktis* and various other revenue divisions are mentioned in a number of inscriptions.

Inscriptions have proved to be a source of the highest value for the construction of the political and cultural history of Bihar. The inscriptions engraved on stones and metals are free from the processes of tampering and delaying which is possible in case of other documents written on perishable material. Thus the value of inscriptions as contemporary documents remains undisputable. Inscriptions are the main basis of our chronology. Though some of them are undated, their characteristic script and language help us in determining their approximate age. Inscriptions mention the names of rulers or donors, their dynasty and exploits in political as well as in cultural spheres. They also help us in the location of the kingdom of the ruler and determining the extent of his kingdom. Their authenticity, therefore, cannot

be challenged outright. The inscriptions contain a systematic account, sometimes in hyperbolic terms, of the achievements of the donors and their predecessors. Administrative set-up, official hierarchy, inter-state relations between the suzerain and the feudatory, list of taxes, and various other important historical information can be gathered from a scientific study of the epigraphic records of Bihar. They also throw a flood of light on the religious, social, economic and cultural history of ancient Bihar. Donations, charities, constructions of temples and images are also mentioned in these records. Without these records our knowledge would have remained inadequate. As the history of Bihar is often intimately associated with various parts of India, many inscriptions discovered outside its geographical limit also can be helpful in solving the problems of her history. The inscriptions refer to spiritual consciousness and intellectual attainments and also provide us material for the study of Kavyas.

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NUMISMATIC SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT BIHAR—COIN HOARDS FROM BIHAR

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I

THE IMPORTANCE of coins has been generally realized by historians for the political history. But they have rarely utilized them for reconstructing economic conditions. Although coins have apparently little to say on the economic side, nevertheless when they are examined critically, they do throw some light on economic aspects also. Similarly coins have also much to say on the religious aspect. Coins, properly viewed and studied critically, may help us in reconstructing not only the political, but also the economic history of any region as well the religion or religious leanings of any king or dynasty of a particular region. Hoards of coins, therefore, need special attention and it is necessary that such finds should be properly studied and adequately published. Unfortunately, however, not much attention has been paid so far in this direction.

Thus keeping in view the importance of the coin hoards for the political, religious and economic studies, an account of the 'coin hoards from Bihar' is given here, on the basis of information gathered from old files of "the Treasure Trove coins", maintained in the Patna Museum and also from various journals and from Coin Registers of the Patna Museum itself. It will be seen from the account that coins from nearly each of the districts of which Bihar is comprised have been reported. Before the hoards are described in detail, a summary is given in the hope that it may

be useful as a sort of reference to the various coin types discovered in the different districts of Bihar.

From a perusal of the summary of the different finds of the coins hoards from Bihar one may easily form an idea as to which king or dynasty had ruled in Bihar during a particular period. These hoards also help us to determine the religious leanings of the kings and dynasties, if their coins are studied critically, for one may notice the effigies of a varieties of gods and goddesses on the reverse of some of these coins.

Similarly, if we, on a careful study, analyse the reasons and factors behind the issue of the coins of a particular metal in preference to other metals, or if we try to find out the reasons in regard to the gradual increase or decrease in the weight of the coin of a particular metal during a particular period, they would reveal the economic condition of Bihar behind such a phenomenon during a particular period. In this connection attention may be drawn to the writer's paper entitled the "Economic aspect of coins of Northern India between 185 B.C. and 320 A.D." published in the *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India (Memoirs Series No. 6—Coins and Early Indian Economy, 1976, p. 70)*, a perusal of which will suggest how the coins can help us in acquainting ourselves with the economic conditions of Bihar during a particular period when such a phenomenon is noticed in the coins.

Hence the importance of the study of the coin hoards from Bihar cannot be undermined since it serves to emphasize their value as numismatic source-materials for reconstructing the political, religious and economic history of ancient Bihar. The account of the coin hoards, as given below,¹ is presented for analytical studies by research-scholars in search of numismatic sources for the history of Ancient Bihar.

II

Punchmarked (Trinsataka)

1. Bhagalpur : P. S. Bongong ; Subdivision Madhepura Bariahi (near Ghoroghat), July, 1917.

Silver 58^{1a} : Punchmarked.

(Weights vary from 52.47 grains to 44.75 grains excluding one which weights 40.58 grains only.)

Disposition : Patna Museum (Coin Reg. Nos. 912-959).

2. Bhagalpur : Sultanganj (Durgasthan) 1959-60, 16.5.59.

Gold-2 ;² Gupta dynasty ; Chandragupta II (?)—I (A hook attached). Wt. 125 grains.

Kusana dynasty : Vasudeva (?)—I (A hook attached). Wt. 125 grains.

Disposition : Patna Museum.

3. Bhagalpur : Early part of 19th century. Found in a subterranean passage in Bhagalpur by Mr. Grant. They bear the symbol Sun, Bull, Chaitya, Tree, Soldier with shield and dog.³

Silver—7 ;⁴ Punchmarked.

Disposition : Some coins in British Museum.

4. Bhagalpur : Madhepura 1925

Copper—54 ;⁵ Punchmarked.

Disposition : Indian Museum, Calcutta. 1909

5. Bhagalpur : Supaul.

Silver 15 ;⁶ Punchmarked.

Vol. VIII, pts. I-II.

Disposition : Indian Museum, Calcutta.

6. Bhagalpur : Madhepura.

Copper—a hoard (number ?) ;⁷ Punchmarked.

Disposition : 54 specimens in Indian Museum, Calcutta.

Some specimens in the British Museum also.

7. Bhagalpur : Banka. 1912.

Gold—4 ;⁸ Gupta dynasty ; Chandragupta II-2, Kumar-gupta I-2.

8. Bhagalpur ; Sultanganj. Coins of Swami Rudra Sena.⁹

9. Bhagalpur : Sultanganj.

Gold—2 ;¹⁰ Gupta : Samudragupta ; Kusana : Vasudeva (?) (Both are hooked coins).

10. Bhagalpur : Sultanganj. 16.5.1959.

Gold—2 ;¹¹ Gupta : Samudragupta (Both are hooked coins).

Kusana :

Vasudeva (?)

Coin No. 1. *Obverse* : 'King radiate, standing to left sacrificing at a small altar, spear in left hand'.

Reverse : Goddess seated on throne facing, holding noose in right, cornucopaeae in left hand (bearded)—possibly Ardoksho.

Coin No. 2 : Standard type of Samudragupta.

Obverse : King standing to left holding standard in left hand, sacrificing at altar to his right, behind altar Garuda standard, beneath king's arm 'Samudra'.

Reverse : Goddess Lakshmi on throne, her feet on a lotus ; to left symbol, to right 'Parakramah'.

11. Bhagalpur : Forwarded by the Collector of Bhagalpur with his no. 757-G, dated 24th June, 1885.

Gold coins (Number ?)¹² Indo-Scythians : Vasudeva¹³.

12. Champaran (Bettiah Subdivision), Vill. Lauriya, 1939.

Copper—64 ; Kusana : Kaniska—46 (cf. B. M. C. Pl. XXVI, 3 & XXVII, 4 & XXVII, 6) Huvishka—4 (cf. B. M. C. Pl. XXIX, 2, 3, 4 & 5) Pre-Kusana—14.

Disposition : Patna Museum—Kaniska—2, Huvishka—3, Puri Kusana—1 = 6.

Madras Museum—Kaniska—1, Huvishka—1, Puri Kusana—1 = 3.

Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay—Kaniska—1, Puri Kusana—1 = 2.

Lucknow Museum—Kaniska—1, Nagpur Museum—Kaniska—1, Ajmer Museum, Rajputana—Kaniska—1, Puri Kusana—1 = 2.

Asiatic Society, Bengal—Kaniska 1, Puri Kusana 1 = 2. Watson Museum, Rajkot—Puri Kushana 1, Ravenshaw College Museum, Cuttack—Kaniska 1, Puri Kusana 1 = 2. British Museum—Kaniska 1, Puri Kusana 1 = 2. FitzWilliam Museum, Cambridge—Kaniska 1, Puri Kusana 1 = 2.

Coins for sale 27 Nos.

13. Champaran, Lauria Nandangarh (mound), 1937-38.

Silver 9 ; Indo-British. Disposition : Patna Museum.

14. Champaran, Chaurodano, Pipra, 1912.

Gold 36. Details not available.

Disposition : Distributed to various Museums.

15. Champaran (Motihari), Radhia, 1936/1937 (?) Copper 70 (but only 7 could be recovered).

Kusana : Wema Kadphises 1 (Coin round).

Obverse : King standing to front with his head turned to left making an offering to an altar.

Reverse : Siva standing to front leaning on bull.

Kaniska—2 (coin-round) : *Obverse* : King standing.

Reverse : God standing.

Huvishka—4 (coin round) : *Obverse* of 2 coins : King to right, diademed, riding on an elephant. *Reverse* : God to left ; *obverse* of the other 2 coins : King reclining on low cushioned couch, facing, diademed. *Reverse* : Defaced.

Disposition : Patna Museum.

16. Motihari, village Cherithan (near Lauriya Ariraj). The hoard was found inside an earthen pot buried underground in a tila of village Cherithan.

Copper 15 (?) Kusana Wema Kadphises, Kaniska, Huvishka.

Disposition : In the collection of Sri Ganesh Chaubey of village Bangri, Champaran.

17. Motihari, Bettiah Sub-Division, 1955. The hoard was found underground.

Silver, 20 Punchmarked.

Disposition : Patna Museum.

18. Champaran, Nandangarh, 1935-36. A coin of Huvishka (?) was found.¹⁴

19. Champaran, Pipra village, 1913, Gold 3 (small).¹⁵ Coins probably of king Sivasimha, Mithila (?).

20. Champaran, Lauriya Nandangarh, 1936-37. The coins were found along with one terracotta mould probably of a coin throwing a tree within railing in one compartment and taurine and the river symbol with a line of Brahmi writing in another.

Copper¹⁶—Punchmarked 1.

Cast Coin (Hill & crescent on one side and elephant on the other).

Kusana 2 (1 Kanishka *obv.* King standing ; *Rev.* Sun God.

1 Huvishka *obv.* King riding on elephant, *rev.* : Four armed Siva).

21. Champaran, Nandargarh, 1935-36.

Copper—6¹⁷, Silver—2¹⁸.

Copper : A. Cast Coins = 8.

Variety : (1) *obv.* : Tree in railing ; *rev.* : a taurine enclosed on three sides by a line so as to form an apse.

(2) *Obv.* : Horseman : *Rev.* : Tree.

(3) *Obv.* : Tree in railing, hill cross and taurine, *rev.* : elephant to left, triangular headed symbol, taurine and Swastika : cf. 'Cunningham's Coins of Ancient India', Plate 1, 28 and Smith's 'Cat. of Coins in the Indian Museum', Vol. I, Plate XXII, 16.

(4) Rect. Cast coin *obv.* Swastika : *Rev.* : Blank.

B. Kusana—1 (Huvishka ; *obv.* King seated on a couch ; *rev.* Sun God.)

Silver : Punchmarked=2 (one of the common type but the second one has on the *obv.* : three arched hill, caduceus, solar symbol, taurine and leaves arranged alternately around a circle. *Rev.* : only the single symbol Triskeles).

22. Champaran (Motihari), 1963-37. Gold—2.¹⁹ *Kuhana* coins. Kaniska and Huvishka.

23. Champaran, Gold coins of Sivasimha of Mithila.²⁰

24. Darbhanga, Jalley, 29.10.1927. Coins were found while digging the earth for preparing brick moulds.

Silver 38, Punchmarked 38 : Of these 27 coins are rectangular, 4 are oval and 7 are broken. Symbols on them are : Solar, Lotus, tree, caduceus, hand with 4 fingers, 3 arched chaitya symbol surmounted by a crescent, a steel yard, bull, fish etc.

Disposition : Patna Museum 12, Indian Museum, Calcutt 2, Madras Museum 2, Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay 2, Lucknow Museum 4, Nagpur Museum 4, Public Library, Shillong 4, Ajmer Museum 2, Dacca Museum 4, Victoria Museum, Karachi 2.

25. Darbhanga, Samastipur Subdiv., Rosera P.S., Village Dumra
21st Jan. 1942.

As the reports go, a pot containing 500 copper coins was unearthed in village Balipur at Dumra Dih, P. S. Rosera, Subdivision Samastipur in the district of Darbhanga. But with great efforts, the Museum could secure only 19 coins, out of 500—2 of the coins are copper punch-marked coins, 11 are defaced coins and the remaining 6 coins belong to the Mughal rulers.

Copper 500 (?) 21 Punchmarked 2, Defaced 11, Moghal : 6 coins. Aurangzeb 1 (of I.M.C. Pl. XIV, 1968). Shah Alam 12 (P.M.C.Pl. XII, 2040). Alamgir II 1 (I.M.C. Pl. XIX, 2260). Shah Alam II 2/6 (P.M.C. Pl. XIX, 3204). Besides these 11 coins were defaced.

26. Darbhanga Laheriasarai, village Rauna Berai.

Forwarded by the Collector of Darbhanga with his no. 1201 dated Laheriasarai, the 7th August, 1897.

The coins were discovered at the time of digging a tank at a village called Ruana Berai.

Silver 715 :²² Copper 28=743.

Indo-Sassanian coins or Gandhaiya Paise.

Silver 23

Copper 28

51 coins.

(1) Varaha coins : *Obv.* Varaha Avatara of Visnu, *Rev.* : Srimad Adi Varaha and traces of the fire altar below.

(Attribution : Bhojadeva of Kanauj)

Silver-9

(2) Vighraha Coins : *Obv.* : Head of King (very rude) to right. Legend—Sri Vighraha, *Rev.* : Fire altar with letter *ma*. (attribution : King Vighrahapala).

Silver 683.

(3) Similar type (very rude). *Obv.* : Head of king to right. Legend—Sri-vi (ha ?). *Rev.* : Fire altar.

27. Darbhanga, Madhubani Subdivision.

Silver—3623.

Disposition : Patna Museum.

28. Manbhum, village (?)

93 (metal ?)²⁴

Saka Murunda (so called Puri Kusana coins).

Disposition : Returned to the finder.

29. Gaya : P. S. Rafiganj, Math Puraria 1920.

Gold 18²⁵ (Debased) ?

Kidara dynasty.²⁶ Variety A : *Obverse* : King standing to left, legend Kindara or Kedara under R. arm and *Pase* under left. *Reverse* : Goddess seated, nimbate, Variety B : *Obverse* : as in A but *Sa* under left arm. *Reverse* : as in A.

Disposition : Patna Museum 4, Bombay Museum (Debased gold) 2. Fitz William Museum, Cambridge 1, British Museum 1, Royal Asiatic Society, Bombay Branch 1, Bengal Asiatic Society 1, Dacca Museum 2, Phayre Provincial Museum, Rangoon, Burma 1, Ajmer Museum 1, Quetta Museum 1, Peshawar Museum 1, Public Library Shillong 2 = 18.

30. Gaya : P. S. Belaganj, Bhalua, 1941-42.

Silver 129, Punchmarked coins.

Disposition : Patna Museum.

31. Gaya : Jahanabad Subdivision, P. S. Arwal, village Aeyara, April, 1929.

This was found near a mound at a depth of 1.6 inches near the village Aeyara, P.S. Arwal, Jahanabad Subdivision, Gaya.

Gold 1. Gupta dynasty : Chandra Gupta II (Archer type).

Variety : *Obverse* : King standing left, nimbate, wearing close fitting coat, trousers, ear-ring and necklace, holding bow in left hand and arrow in right. Garuda standard bound with fillet on left.

Legend : Chandra between string and king.

Reverse : Goodess Laxshmi, seated, facing, nimbate on lotus, holding fillet in outstretched right hand, left hand rests on hip holding lotus with long stalk. Border of dots. Marginal legend in the Gupta character. *Sri vikramah* (partly defaced) symbol on the right.

Partly defaced.

32. Gaya : Bodh-Gaya. This hoard consisting of five silver punchmarked coins was discovered along with a curious model of Indo-Scythian king Huvishka.

Silver 5²⁷. Punchmarked coins.

33. Gaya : Gold 8²⁸.

Cunningham's reports.

Gupta Dynasty.

Chandragupta 1, Samudragupta 1 (standard type), Chandragupta II 4 (3 of Archer type & one of Lion-slayer type). Kumaragupta II (Horseman type) Skandagupta—1 (heavy weight with legend Kramaditya).

34. Gaya : village Erki.

Forwarded by Maulavi Fazl-Ullah, Sub-Registrar of Gaya with his letter dated the 27th May 1897 and 9th July 1897. The coins were found 10 ft. below the surface of the earth when a well was sunk in a village called Erki about 29 miles north of Gaya.

Silver 20²⁹

So called punchmarked coins 97 round and 13 approximately square or oblong pieces.

Disposition : Returned to finder.

35. Hazaribagh : Paru, Mohajan, 1916 Silver—75.

Disposition : Patna Museum—35, other Museums—41, (Names not available).

36. Hazaribagh : P. S. Bengabad, Giridih Subdivision. Jungles of Kositand, 1945.

Coins were found buried underground in an earthen pot in the jungle of Kositand, P. S. Bengabad, Giridih Subdivision, Dist. Hazaribah, Copper—130.

Kusana : Kaniska—110 (cf. I.M.C. Pl. XI, 8, 9 & Pl. XII, 4). Worn out—19, Unidentified—1.

37. Monghyr : P.S. Surajgarha, village Abgil, 20.9.1940.

Coins were found in an earthen pot by the side of the river Ganges by one Belai Mushar while fishing in the Ganges on the 20th Sept., 1940.

Base Gold—3 (weight : one tola only), Copper—4,

Gahadwala—Gold 3, Govindachandradeva—3, Defaced copper-4.

Disposition : Patna Museum (Coin Reg. No. 16240-46).

38. Monghyr : Jamui, Subdivision, Ban Pokhar, 1912-13.

Gold 4.³⁰

39. Monghyr : Jamui, Karangarh, 1912, Silver-2, Impure Gold-4.

Gahadwala dynasty—Impure Gold-4, Govindachandradeva (Kanauij). Sultans of Delhi—Silver-1 Shamshuddin Altamas (624 Hijri?). Sultans of Bengal—Silver-1. Gayasuddin Iwaz (620 Hijri).

Disposition : Not known.

40. Monghyr : P. S. Sheikpura, village Gohada, Oct., 1939.

The treasure was found in a piece of land in village Gohada, P. S. Sheikpura belonging to one Omar Khan who had allowed one Horil Chamar for digging the earth there for constructing a house. While digging he found the coins in an earthen pot. Later on he sold them to one Sri Ramrup Lal Varma for Rs. 15/- only. Ultimately the entire lot was acquired for the Patna Museum.

Silver—611 Punchmarked.

Disposition : Patna Museum (nos. 16877-17487

=611 coins).³¹

41. Monghyr : 1848 (near about).

Mr. D. Cunliffe Esqr., Magistrate of Monghyr communicated the above discovery. Hindu ancient coin 8.³²

42. Monghyr : Begusaraai, Jayamanglagarh Punchmarked—5.³³

43. Monghyr : Nov., 1959. Gold-3.³⁴

Gupta—1 (Samudragupta—Standard type).

Kusana—2 (Kaniska—in one the legend is *oesho* and in the second it is *Athso*).

44. Monghyr : 30.9.63. Silver—79.³⁵ Punchmarked.

45. Muzaffarpur, Hajipur, 1917.

These coins were lying in the S.D.O.'s Court for a long time before they were sent to Patna Museum in 1917. Debased Silver : 67.³⁶

Dramas of Vighrahapaladeva : 67 (*Obverse* : Crude head.

Sri in large letters near the face, *Vigraha* below.

Reverse : Sassanian altar with attendants.

Disposition : Patna Museum—8, Fitz William Museum, Cambridge—3, British Museum—4, Bombay Branch, R.A.S.—4, Dacca Museum—4, Asiatic Society of Bengal—4, Rangoon Museum—4, Rajputana Museum, Ajmer—4, Quetta Museum—4, Arch Museum, Poona—4, Public Library, Shillong—4, Central Museum, Nagpur—4 Lahore Museum—4, Lucknow Museum—4, Madras Museum—4, Lucknow Museum—4,

46. Muzaffarpur, Vaishali, Kusana coins.³⁷

47. Muzaffarpur, Vaishali, 1956, Copper-2 or³⁸ Kusana coins.

48. Muzaffarpur, Hajipur Kunahra Ghat, 1893, Gold-22³⁹ (but only 14 could be recovered).

Gupta dynasty : Chandragupta I-1.

Samudragupta-4 (2 Standard type, 1 Archer type, 1 Battle axe type).

Chandragupta II-9 (Archer 3, Chhatra 3 & Lion-slayer type-3.)

49. Muzaffarpur Basarh (Vaishali) excavations, 1011-12.

Silver-1⁴⁰ copper-7, Silver : Punchmarked.

Copper : Punchmarked-1, Kusana-Kadphises II-1, Muhammadan-3, Unidentifiable-2 = 7.

50. Muzaffarpur, Basarh (Vaishali), 1955.

A big hoard of punchmarked coins, but only 52 could be recovered and the rest melted down⁴¹.

One of them probably belonged to the local issue and the remaining were the Imperial Magadhan issues⁴².

51. Basarh, Copper punchmarked coins of 100 Rattis⁴³.

Symbols : Sun, a triangle, three arches side by side and the branch of a tree.

52. Patna, Fatuwah, Shahjahanpur, 1925-26, Gold-18.

Gupta dynasty : 5, Chandragupta II-5 (Archer type-4, Chhatra type-1).

(Rest of the coins did not come in the hands of the authorities).

53. Patna, Ramna Mohalla (Dhanesh Chandra Roy's Street,

14th June, 1935).

At a depth of 8 to 10 feet in the sewerage excavation, innumerable silver punchmarked coins were found in an earthen pot—but only 46 could be acquired. The coins were found along with a large number of finished and unfinished beads and rock crystal wares probably of the Mauryan and pre-Mauryan periods. Out of the 46 coins, two are small broken pieces and one is a dumpy coin of very early type. In this connection it is also worthy to note that on two coins are exactly similar to each other.

On chemical analysis, the coins were found to be of silver metal with little mixture of copper and iron, etc. The coins weighed between 40 and 52 grains⁴⁴.

The symbols of the copper punchmarked coins are quite different from those on other known copper punchmarked coins⁴⁵.

Silver-45, Copper-1 (copper punchmarked; Wt. 90-10 grains).

54. Patna (Sewerage, Patna Main Drainage), 1935, Silver-43.

55. Patna, Kumhrar, 1926.

It was found by one chowkidar named Baghera at the excavation site, Copper-1.

56. Patna, Rajgir, 24.1.1918.

Silver-5, Copper-7, Punchmarked coins: Silver-5, Copper-1, Cast coins (copper)—6.

57. Patna, Mohalla Lohanipur, 1937.

Silver-2000, Punchmarked coin: (Probably Maurya and pre-Maurya).

Disposition: Patna Museum (?)

58. Patna, Rajgir, 18.10.1935 Copper-3.

Disposition: Patna Museum.

59. Patna, 1935, Silver 33,⁴⁶ Punchmarked.

Disposition: Not known.

Patna Kumhrar 1951-55, 7 coins⁴⁷ Kusans,

60. Patna Pataliputra (Kumhrar & Bulandibagh), 1912-13, Copper-303⁴⁸ Gold-2.

Copper: (1) Square cast coins: 175.

Symbols on the coins: Tree in railing, Taurine Crescented Hill and hollow cross on one side and elephant, Taurine, Banner and Swastika on the other.

(2) Circular cast coins: 58

Symbols—Elephant before banner on one side and crescented hill on the other.

(3) Copper punchmarked coins: 25.

(4) Kusana Coins:

(a) Wima Kadphises-3.

(b) Kaniska-12.

Variety: Wind god-5, Sun god-4, Siva four armed-1, Indistinct-2.

(c) Huvishka.

Variety: King seated on couch-8, King seated on elephant-8, King seated cross legged-10, Blurred-4.

Gold: Kusan: (a) Vasudeva-1 (King standing and offering oblations on the *obverse* and Siva with his bull on the *reverse*).

(b) Later Kusana-1 (King standing offering oblations on the *obverse*, and Goddess Ardoksho seated on the high backed throne on the *reverse*).

61. Patna City, Sadargalli, Winter 1956.

A gold Talisma¹⁰ imitating the coin of Huvishka. (Pierced at two places).

Obverse: Aureate bust of the middle-aged king to right, wearing a graceful crown. The king wears a long sleeved coat and holds a corn sheaf (?) in the left hand and a banner (?) across shoulder in the right.

Legend Paonanopa-oohpki.

Reverse: Within dotted border, Goddess Ardoksho standing to left wearing a headdress. Her left hand is on the waist and she is holding a cornucopia in the right hand.

Legend: Apdoxpo.

N.B. "The present Talisman along with the other⁵⁰ found at Bodh-Gaya show that the gold Kusana currency was so common that the ladies of Bihar had taken a fancy for some of its types and ordered the goldsmiths

to prepare talismans in their imitation⁵¹.

62. Patna Kumhrar excavations (Ratan Tata's excavations) year (?) Copper-52⁵², Kusana coins : Kadphises II, Huvishka, Kaniska. Details not available.
63. Patna, Nalanda (From the Arch. Excavations).⁵³
 - (A) Copper cast coins : (total number ?).
 - (B) Gold coins of Kumdragupta I : Archer type.
(*Obverse* : showing king standing with bow in left hand with string inwards—the right hand being extended across the Garuda standard—*Reverse* showing nimbate goddess Lakshmi seated cross-legged on lotus. Legend : Sri Mahendra' : Wt. 126.55 grains and .75 in diameter. The coin of Kumaragupta was found from a monastery no. 4 along with a handful of courie shells.
 - (C) Gold coin of Narsimhagupta : Archer type.
Discovered in between the year 1915-26—along with this coin—two clay moulds of his coins were found showing on *obverse* king standing with bow and arrow and the *reverse* having seated Lakshmi. The discovery of the moulds makes it clear that most of the coins of Narsimhagupta were cast and not die-struck coins.
 - (D) Gold coins of Sasanka :
(*Obverse* : Siva on bull, on right Sri-Sa, below jayah and on its *reverse* Lakshmi seated on lotus with elephants on either side pouring water on her and the legend Sri-Sasankah.
 - (E) Three Electrum coins of Sri Pratapa :
(On the *obverse* : a headless king standing and the legend Sri Pratapa and the *reverse* having a seated goddess—rude in type and execution).
 - (F) Billon coins : 54 nos.
(According to G. C. Chandra⁵⁴ these are the coins of the Hun dynasty but Dr. Ray⁵⁵ doubts his view : *Obverse* show a degenerated form of the Sassanian fire-altar. The *reverse* type with a group of dots).
 - (G) One silver coin of Pratihara Bhoja I :
(It is of the usual Adivaraha type—*obverse* showing the

Symbols on the coins: Tree in railing, Taurine Crescented Hill and hollow cross on one side and elephant, Taurine, Banner and Swastika on the other.

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 - (G) One silver coin of Pratihara Bhoja I :
(It is of the usual Adivaraha type—*obverse* showing the

boar incarnation of Vishnu and the *reverse* legend—Srimadadivaraha).

(II) A hoard of 86 silver coins of Sri-Vigra type :

(*Obverse* : a rude head with indications of Sassanian fire altar on the *reverse*).

(I) A gold coin of Govindachandradeva of Gahadawala dynasty :

(Usual king and Lakshmi type).

(J) One rectangular gold plaqued copper coin :

Discovered at a depth of 9' 2" at Chaitya site No. 12.

(K) A copper coin :

(*Obverse* : traces of a king standing to left.

(L) A round thick copper coin : a coin ?

(M) A couple of Muslim coins :

Obverse : Inscription Abdul Fatah.

Reverse : Inscription Allah.

64. Patna, Rajgir,

Punchmarked coins (Nos. ?) of the denomination of Vinsatika⁵⁶ (i.e., a silver coin of 20 Mashakas).

Disposition : Lucknow Museum.

65. Patna, Rajgir.

Cast and single die copper coins-11⁵⁷ (some new varieties).

66. Patna, Bulandibagh.

A large number of square or rectangular cast copper coins.⁵⁸ (From the Mauryan level of 14' to 18' feet).

67. Patna, Kumrahar (Ratan Tata's Excavations), 1912-13.

Silver-7, Copper-68⁵⁹.

Silver : Punchmarked 7 (6 square and 1 round).

Copper : (A) Punchmarked 10 (oblong, square—one heavy and large type).

(B) Cast coins 15 (Rectangular, circular, elephant and Chaitya type : one *reverse* : tree within railing *obv.* Ujjain symbol and elephant).

(C) Mitra type 4 (One of Indramitra and the rest of Mitra types).

(D) Kusana 2 (Kaniska of Vayu type).

(E) Unidentified, defaced and fragments 19.

- (F) Modern 9 (Muhammadan and one Nepalese probably outwardly brought by the Cooly = 68).
68. Patna, Kumarahar excavations, 1951-1955).
 Silver-21⁶⁰ Silver coated-8, * Copper-143.
 Silver : Punchmarked-20.
 Silver plated : Silver plated Punchmarked coins-8.
 Copper : (a) Punchmarked copper coins-32.
 (b) Cast copper coins-72.
 (c) Kausambi coins (Lankey Bull type)-6.
 (d) Panchala and Ayodhya coins-2 (one coin of Bhumi-mitra of Panchala, Ayodhya coin *obv* : Bull before a standard or spear *Rev*. : Probably a cock).
 (e) Kusana coins—7 (2 coins of king Kaniska and 5 coins of king Huvishka).
 (f) Gupta coins—19 (All are of Chandragupta II and are round in shape. The following groups may be seen in them : (a) Bust of the king to left, (b) king standing and holding flower in right hand, (c) king standing and offering oblations by right hand, (d) king with umbrella-bearer).
69. Patna, Nalanda (excavation), 1919-20.
 Gold-1,⁶¹ Silver-1.
 Gold : King Pratapaditya (Cir. 700 A.D.)⁶²
 Silver-Unidentified⁶³.
70. Patna, Rajgir, March, 1962.
 The coins were discovered in a small earthen pot in a layer underlying the outer extremity of mud rampart of the southern defences of the new fort at Rajgir in the excavations during March 1962. From this stratum some N.B.P. potteries were also found.
 Silver-14⁶⁴ Punchmarked coins (32 Ratis).
71. Patna, Ghosarva (Bihar).
 Silver coins of Vighrahapala and one copper and one gold coin of Mahipala⁶⁵
72. Pataliputra.
 Copper : Punchmarked coins of 100 Rattis⁶⁶.
 Symbols : Sun, a triangle, three arches side by side and the fourth symbol is the branch of a tree.

73. Patna, Rajgir.

Eleven varieties of interesting and rare series of cast coins were discovered from Rajgir along with some punchmarked and early cast coins. They bear the figure of a nude woman, a stage, a pair of scales, etc.

Copper-11,⁶⁷ Cast coins.

74. Patna, Fatuha.

Some Coins (metal ?)⁶⁸

Cheeroo Rajahas who ruled in Bihar.

75. Purnea : Kharsota village, about middle of June, 1928.

The hoard was discovered by a child in an earthen pot buried underground. Along with the coins three silver rings and eight pieces of broken pottery were also found.

Silver—121.

Pala : Vighrahapala—121—Vighrahapala I-8 coins Class, I, Vighrahapala, II, Variety A—21—Class II. Vighrahapala III—20—Class IV—121 coins.

Description :

(1) Coins of Vighrahapala, 1, (900 A.D.). Class I.

Obverse : Very rude head to right. Sri in large letters in front of face, *Vigra*(ha) below.

Reverse : Indications of Sassanian altar with attendants, in centre Sri or ma.

(2) Vighrahapala, II, (900 A.D.). Class III.

Obverse : Doubtful indication of head on left margin, most of the space occupied by Sri in bold characters.

Reverse : Indeterminate to marks scarcely suggesting the altar.

(4) Vighrahapala III, (1055 A.D.). Class IV.

Obverse : Doubtful indication of head on left margin—Sri is not clear.

Reverse : Indeterminate marks scarcely suggesting the altar.

Disposition : Patna Museum : Vighrahapala I—4, Vighrahapala IIA—4, Vighrahapala IIB—4, Vighrahapala III—4 = 16.

Madras Museum : Vighrahapala I—1, Vighrahapala IIA—2, Vighrahapala IIB—7, Vighrahapala III—2 = 12.

Lucknow Museum : Vigrahapala I—1, Vigrahapala IIA—2, Vigrahapala IIB—7, Vigrahapala III—2=12.

Lahore Museum : Vigrahapala II—1, Vigrahapala IIA—1, Vigrahapala IIB—7, Vigrahapala III—2=11.

Nagpur Museum : Vigrahapala I—1, Vigrahapala IIA—1, Vigrahapala IIB—7, Vigrahapala III—2=11.

Public Library, Shillong : Vigrahapala IIA—1, Vigrahapala IIB—7, Vigrahapala III—2=10.

Historical Museum, Satara : Vigrahapala IIA—2, Vigrahapala—IIB—7, Vigrahapala III—2=11.

Ajmer Museum : Vigrahapala IIA—2, Vigrahapala IIB—6, Vigrahapala III—1=9.

Dacca Museum : Vigrahapala IIA—2, Vigrahapala IIB—7, Vigrahapala III—1 = 10.

Bombay Branch Royal Asiatic Society : Vigrahapala IIA—2, Vigrahapala IIB—6, Vigrahapala III—1=9.

Victoria Museum, Karachi : Vigrahapala IIA—2, Vigrahapala IIB—7, Vigrahapala III—1=10.

76. Purnea, P.S. Dhamdaha, Village Patraha, 15.5.13.

The hoard was discovered from inside a thick earthen ware (Ghaia) near the bed of a small river named Kadia (an offshoot of Koshi river) at Khunt Ghat at Purnea.

Silver 2873.⁶⁹

Punchmarked coins : Thick square—1450, thin square—420, thin round—215, thick round—788=2873.

(Out of these 112 coins were duplicate).

Disposition : Historical Museum, Satara—13, Victoria Museum, Karachi—13, Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic Society, Bombay—15, Dacca Museum—4, Rajputana Museum, Ajmer—4, Public Library, Shillong—6, Central Museum, Nagpur—6, Central Museum, Lahore—7, Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay—9, Madras Museum—9, Indian Museum, Calcutta—16, Ravenshaw College Museum, Cuttack—10, Patna Museum—2750—2871 coins only.

77. Purnea : Kishanganj.

Forwarded by Babu Rampada Chatterjee, Sub-Deputy Collector.

Go'd—1,⁷⁰ Silver—7.

These were in a copper case (Dibba) buried underground, discovered while ploughing field.

Base Gold : (Full rupees—14, Half rupees—1=15⁷¹ (Total weight 5½ tolas).

Gahadawala dynasty of Kanya-Kubja :

Govindachandradeva of Kanauj : Full rupees—14, Half rupees—1 = 15.

Obverse : Four-handed seated Goddess.

Reverse : Legend in a 3 lines (of I.M.C. Vol. I, page 260).

Disposition : Patna Museum, Govindachandradeva of Kanauj—Full rupees—2, Half rupee—1 = 3.

FitzWilliam Museum, Cambridge—1.

Bombay Branch Royal Asiatic

Society	Do	Do	—1
Dacca Museum	Do	Do	—1
Rangoon Museum, Burma	Do	Do	—1
Rajputana Museum, Ajmer	Do	Do	—1
Quetta Museum	Do	Do	—1
Peshawar Museum	Do	Do	—2
Arch. Museum, Poona	Do	Do	—2
Madras Museum	Do	Do	—2

78. Ranchi, Karra Thana

Copper—1⁷² Kaniska

79. Saran, Dumrai, 1924.

Gold—2.

Kalachuri or Haihaya dynasty of Western India (capital at Tripuri).

Gangeya Deva—2 (1015-40 A.D.).

Description :

A. *Obverse* : Three lines legend in bold characters.

(1) Srimad-Ga, (2) Ngeya-de, (3) Va.

Reverse : Nimbate Goddess, seated, facing, cross-legged with her hands spread out at her sides.

B. *Obverse* : Only two lined legend (incomplete) in bold characters, covering face of the coin.

(1) Srimad-Ga, (2) Ngeya-de.

Reverse : Same as that of 'A',

Disposition : Patna Museum.

80. Sahabad, (lying in the Sub-Treasury, Buxar), 1960-61.

These were acquired from the District Magistrate, Sahabad through Sri S. V. Sohoni, Commissioner, Patna Division. These coins were lying in the Sub-Treasury, Buxar (Dist. Sahabad).

Silver—9.

Pala Dynasty : King Vighrahapala.

Disposition : Patna Museum.

81. Sahabad, Bhabhua, 1953.

Silver—90.

Punchmarked (with new varieties).

Disposition : Bharat Kala Bhawan, Banaras—70, Patna Museum, Patna—20=90.

82. Sahabad, Bhabua Subdivision, P.S. Ramarh, village Dewaitha, 1940

Gold—400⁷³

Gupta Coins.

N.B. Unfortunately no coin could be recovered. They were either melted down or passed into market unnoticed.

83. Singhbhum, Rakha Mines (Cape Copper Company) 1927-28, Copper—12.

Silver—3

Puri Kusana—Copper—12

Description : *Obverse* : A figure standing to right with right arm raised, left arm outstretched with palms hanging as if holding something, figure is draped in long coat and wearing boots placed horizontally.

Reverse : A figure standing to right with the right arm raised upwards and has got a crescent to the left of the left shoulder.

84. Singhbhum, Rakha Hill mines (Maholia) of the Cape Copper Company, 31st May, 1917.

The coins were found buried about one foot below the surface. In all 3½ lbs. weight of coins were discovered. Small fragments of a broken clay pot were found with the

coins which might have been the container of the coins. The fact that the edges of the coins were not trimmed lends a major support to the possibility of the existence of a mint there.

Copper—363⁷⁴

Puri Kusana.

A note on the coin.

One of the coins had some inscription. Its weight was 78.16 grains and its diameter 85 inches. The whole lot were of two types :

(A) Extended arms on the *obverse*—215 coins ;

(B) On which the left arm is downwards—91 coins = 306 (of 4 coins. Variety not known).

One new variety of coin⁷⁵ in the lot :

'This being a new type not hitherto found. On the *reverse* there is the figure of the moon-god with crescent and wearing turned-up boots, and on the *obverse*, in place of the figure of the Kusana king, are three coins which may possibly represent hills and below them is the word 'Tanka'.⁷⁶

On the basis of palaeography this lot of coins does not appear to be earlier than the 7th century A.D.

Disposition : Patna Museum 53.

85. Singhbhum : Seraikella-Kharsawan Subdivision, village Pindrabera, 1952.

Discovered by the side of a rivulet near village Pindrabera in Seraikella-Kharsawan Subdivision. The coins were formed into one mass and most of them were eaten up by rust.

A hoard of copper coins (only 20 could be obtained as the rest were in a very decomposed and rusted condition).

Probably Puri-Kusana (Marks of effigy on both sides).

Disposition : Patna Museum.

86. Singhbhum : Chaibasa, Third Quarter of the 19th century. Silver—1191⁷⁷ Punchmarked (various shapes).

Disposition : Central Museum, Nagpur—12 (Rest not known).

87. Singhbhum : Chaibasa.
Punchmarked coins.⁷⁸
88. Singhbhum : Chaibasa.
Silver—1191⁷⁹ (Wt. 4 annas). Punchmarked coins.
89. Provenance (?)
Punchmarked of the denomination of Trinsataka.⁸⁰

REFERENCES

- ¹ Summary of accounts of coins of *Ancient Bihar* based on the Writer's paper 'Coin Hoards from Bihar', *The Indian Numismatic Chronicle*, Vol. VIII, pts. I, II, 1970.
- ^{1a} The hoard is commonly known as Ghoraghat hoard, although the coins were found at Bariahi village. Vide : *ASIAR*, Eastern Circle 1917-18, p. 26 ; Appendix Ei(B). Also cf. the article of E. H. C. Walsh, *An examination of 58 silver punchmarked coins found at Ghoraghat* in *JBORS*, Vol. V, 1919, pt. IV, pp. 463-493. Plates I, III. Also vide : *ASIAR*, Eastern (now Central) Circle, 1919-29, p. 33, Appendix H(B). Also of *BMCAI*, Allan, p. XLVI.
- ² *The Indian Numismatic Chronicle*, Vol. I, 1960, pt. I & II, p. 86.
- ³ *BMCAI*, Allan, p. XLVII, Note 50.
- ⁴ Cunningham's *Archaeological Survey Report* XV, p. 31-32. Also of *BMCAI*, Allan, p. XLVII, Note 50.
- ⁵ *BMCAI*, Intro., p. LXIX.
- ⁶ Vide : *JNSI*, XVII, 1955, pt. I, page II of Monograph, no. 2.
- ⁷ *JNSI*, XX, 1958, pt. II, p. 122.
Also of *ASR*, 1926, p. 154 & *BMC*, *Ancient India*, pp. LXXVIII-LXXIX.
- ⁸ Dr. P. L. Gupta's *The Imperial Guptas*, footnote 74.
- ⁹ Cunningham's *ASR*, XV, pp. 29-30.
- ¹⁰ Information : *Coin Register of Patna Museum*, Nos. 19813-15. Also of *INC*, Vol. II, 1961, pt. 1, pp. 83-84.
- ¹¹ *The Indian Numismatic Chronicle*, Vol. II, 1961, pt. I, pp. 83-84.
Also of *Coin Register of Patna Museum*, Stock Nos. 19813-14.
- ¹² *JASB*, 1885, *Proceedings* Nov., Page 129.
- ¹³ Described by Prinsep in *Indian Antiquities* (ed. by Thomas), Vol. I, p. 227, Plate XXII, Fig. 4. Also of H. H. Wilson in *Ariana Antiquae*, p. 378 (Plate XIV, figs. 12, 13, 14).
- ¹⁴ Vide : *ASR*, 1935-36, p. 64.
- ¹⁵ Vide : *ASR*, 1913-14, p. 248.
- ¹⁶ Vide : *ASIAR*, 1963-37, pp. 49-50.

- ¹⁷ Vide : *ASIAR*, 1935-36, pp. 63-66.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹ *ASIAR*, 1936-37, p. 64.
- ²⁰ *ASR*, 1913-14, p. 248-60.
- ²¹ Vide : Shere in *JNSI*, Vol. V, pt. I, June, 1943, p. 109.
- ²² *JASB*, 1898, June, Report V (Proceedings), p. 163.
- ²³ *JASB*, 1874, August, pp. 156-157.
- ²⁴ *Indian Culture* III, p. 727.
- ²⁵ Vide : *ASIAR*, Eastern (now Central) Circle, 1919-20, p. 33, Appendix H(B).
- ²⁶ V. Smith's *IMC*, p. 90, Nos. 5 to 14.
- ²⁷ *ASR*, XVI, p. 4, also of *BMCAI*, Allan, p. XLVIII, Note 52.
- ²⁸ Vide : Dr. P. L. Gupta's *The Imperial Guptas*, footnote 76.
- ²⁹ *JASB*, 1898, June, Report III, p. 161.
- ³⁰ *ASIAR*, 1912-13, p. 6 ; also of *ASIAR*, 1034-35, p. 91.
- ³¹ Receipt Register No. 54 & 62 dated 19.12.1939.
- ³² *JASB*, Vol. 17, pt. I, Jan. 1848, Proceedings, p. 80.
- ³³ *The Indian Numismatic Chronicle*, Vol. II, 1961, pt. I, pp. 78-79.
- ³⁴ *The Indian Numismatic Chronicle*, Vol. II, 1961, pt. I, 79-81.
- ³⁵ Information : *Coin Register of Patna Museum*, No. 20225-20333.
- ³⁶ Vide : *ASIAR* (?), Eastern Circle, 1917-18, p. 26, Appendix E1 (B).
- ³⁷ *JNSI* (?), XIII, p. 145.
- ³⁸ *JNSI*, XX, 1958, pt. I, p. 3.
- ³⁹ *JNSI*, XX, 1958, pt. II, p. 220 (S. V. Sohoni's last but one paragraph), also of Dr. P. L. Gupta's *The Imperial Guptas*, footnote 73.
- ⁴⁰ *ASIAR*, 1913-14, pp. 154-185.
- ⁴¹ *The Indian Numismatic Chronicle*, II, 1961, pt. I, p. 13.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- ⁴³ *Proceedings of All India Oriental Conference*, 1885, pp. 626-631.
- ⁴⁴ E. H. C. Walsh in *JBORS*, Vol. XXV, pt., p. 93.
- ⁴⁵ *JBORS*, XXV, pt. II, p. 107.
- ⁴⁶ *ASIAR*, 1935-36, p. 134.
- ⁴⁷ *Kumhrar Excavation Report*, 1951-55, p. 99.
- ⁴⁸ A. S. Altekar, 'Coins in Kumhrar and Bulandibagh (Pataliputra) excavation in 1912-13' in *JNSI*, Vol. XIII, pt. II, Dec. 1951, pp. 144-47. Also of *ASIAR*, Eastern Circle, 1915-16, pp. 29-30.
- ⁴⁹ *JNSI*, XX, 1958, pt. I, p. 2.
- ⁵⁰ A gold Talisman bearing the bust of Huvishka on both sides was also found at Bodh-Gaya by Cunningham below the Vajrasana throne.
- ⁵¹ *JNSI* (?), XX, 1958, pt. I, p. 2.
- ⁵² *ASIAR* (?), Eastern Circle, 1913-14, p. 71, also of *JNSI*, XX, 1958, pt. I, p. 3.
- ⁵³ Vide : *JNSI*, XVIII, pt. I, 1946, p. 101, 'On coins recovered from Nalanda Excavations' by Dr. S. C. Ray.

- ⁵⁴ *ASIAR*, 1930-34.
- ⁵⁵ *JNSI*, XVIII, pt. I, 1956, p. 101.
- ⁵⁶ *JNSI*, Vol. XX, 1958, pt. II, p. 116; also of reference to these coins in V. S. Agrawala's *India as known to Panini*, p. 270.
- ⁵⁷ Vide : *Numismatic Supplement*, No. XLVI, 1935-36, Article No. 329, pp. 9 to 14, entitled 'The Coins of Rajgir' by S. Singh Roy.
- ⁵⁸ Vide : *Numismatic Supplement*, XLVII, 1937-38, Article No. 341, pp. 62-63.
- ⁵⁹ Vide : *ASIAR*, 1912-13, pp. 84-86, Appendix B These coins were found from different strata and depths. From a perusal of these coins it will be seen that they "range from the time of the early punchmarked and cast coins to that of Shah Alam but with a wide gap between the Guptas and the Muslims". Also cf. *BMCAL*, Allan, p. XLVIII, Note 52.
- ⁶⁰ Vide : *Report on Kumhrar Excavations*, 1951-1955, pp. 86-102.
- * In the beginning they looked like silver but after cleaning these turned out to be copper.
- ⁶¹ *ASIAR*, Eastern (now Central) Circle, 1919-20, pp. 35-48.
- ⁶² The gold coins of king Pratapaditya were found at south-east corner outside main monastery at a depth of 24' from top of existing basement of about 12' from the present ground level of monastery-B (cf. V. Smith, *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum*, p. 268, plate XXVIII-5).
- ⁶³ The identified silver coin was found at site no. 1a outside north-west corner room to the west of pavilion, about 5' below the basement.
- ⁶⁴ *The Indian Numismatic Chronicle*, Vol. III, pt. II, p. 135.
- ⁶⁵ Vide : Cunningham's *ASR*, XI, p. 125.
- ⁶⁶ Vide : *Proceedings of All India Oriental Conference*, 1935, pp. 626-631.
- ⁶⁷ *JNSI*, Vol. I, p. 5.
- ⁶⁸ *JASB*, 1854, p. 502.
- ⁶⁹ Vide : *Memoir No. 62 of the Archaeological Survey of India*, 1940—title of the article *A hoard of silver punchmarked coins from Purnea*, also cf. *JNSI*, Vol. IV, pt. II, Dec. 1842, p. 81, also cf. *ASIAR*, Eastern Circle, 1916-17, pp. 3-17, also cf. *JBORS*, 1919, p. 20, also cf. *BMCAL*, Allan, p. XLVIII, Note 52.
- ⁷⁰ *JASB*, 1903, *Proceedings*, May, page 92.
- ⁷¹ *ASIAR*, Eastern Circle (now Central Circle), 1919-20, p. 33,
- | | |
|---------|--|
| | Appendix H(B) |
| Also of | Do 1917-18, p. 26, |
| | Appendix EI(B) |
| | Do 1918-19, p. 36, |
| | Appendix HI(B) |
| | Do 1919, p. 6 (15 gold coins—Gahadwala Govindachandradeva) |

- ⁷² *JNSI*, Vol. XIII, pt. I, June, 1951, p. 107, A. Banerji's 'Kusanas in Eastern India'.
- ⁷³ *JNSI*, XX, 1958, pt. II, p. 219 (S. V. Sohoni's views). Vide : Dr. P. L. Gupta's *The Imperial Gupta*, footnote 78.
- ⁷⁴ The hoard was found from the Northern slope of the Rakha Hills Range within the Mining Lease held by the Cape Copper Company.
- ⁷⁵ The coin shown in fig. 2 facing page 80 of *JBORS*, Vol. V, pt. I, article on Puri Kusana coins by E. H. C. Walsh.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁷ Vide : *Proc. ASB*, 1885, p. 126, also of *BMCAI*, Allan, p. XLIX.
- ⁷⁸ *Proceedings of ASB*, 1885, p. 126.
- ⁷⁹ *JASB*, 1885, November, p. 126. *N.B.* Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum, Chaibasa sent these coins with his letter no. 779 dated 6th Jan., 1885, also of *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. I, pp. 209ff.
- ⁸⁰ *JNSI*, XX, 1958, pt. II, p. 116 ; also of *JUPHS*, July, 1939, p. 33. Here Durga Prasad discovered coins of 58 Mashakas or Rattis—two rattis less than what it was required in a Trinataka Coin (60 Mashakas) ; this may be due to circulation.

Medieval Period

A SURVEY OF SOURCE-MATERIAL FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL BIHAR

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THE SOURCES for the study of the history of a particular area or period can be examined independently by themselves, or with reference to certain broad themes which are of major importance in the history of that area or period. Certain common aspects such as chronological/dynastic framework, polity, social structure and economic organization will be examined in all cases but within these general aspects there might be more specific themes to investigate. Theme-wise,¹ for example, in the case of medieval Bihar, one may have to take up first certain aspects of the political geography, particularly the changing political boundaries, for which the epigraphic sources are the most valuable. In regard to political developments, the establishment of the short-lived Nuhani kingdom, which served as the base for the rise of the great medieval Indian ruler Sher Shah, and the activities of the Kakars and Kararanis, who from their base in Bihar developed into an important regional kingdom and established the last Pathan ruling dynasty in eastern India, deserve greater attention. A more general and important topic is the history of the different branches of landed aristocracy in medieval Bihar, the different rajas, not just in terms of the wars between them and Mughal *subahdars*/officials, but their status as *zamindars* or *mansabdars*, the now-conciliating-now-clashing nature of their relationship with the Mughal government. For this the private collections of the records belonging to scions of these families are invaluable. For social conditions, the hagiological literature, the legal digests and other literary works written in Mithila constitute a vast but yet-

to-be-thoroughly-tapped group of source-material. The accounts of European travellers and Factory Records continue to be the staple stock of those engaged in the study of economic conditions. The following survey takes into account both these methods. Language-wise it relates mainly to sources in Persian, there being other sections for other language-groups.

Unlike some other regions, such as Kashmir and Gujarat, medieval Bihar was not so well-defined geographically or linguistically, nor did it form the base of a separate kingdom for any length of time. Politically, it was often a bone of contention between the rulers of Delhi and Lakhnauti. Until the first quarter of the fourteenth century, the greater portion of northern Bihar was included in the Karnata kingdom of Mithila, while Chotanagpur area was virtually a *terra incognita*. Due to these, as also some other factors, Bihar did not have a separate integrated account of its own, and one has to pick stray references from a wide variety of sources.

These can be divided into the following broad categories :

A. (i) General historical works, memoirs and biographical dictionaries ; (ii) *dasturu'l amal*, tracts or revenue matters, glossaries of technical terms, etc. ; (iii) hagiological literature ; (iv) epistolary collections and legal digests ; (v) European Traveller's Accounts and Factory Records.

B. (i) Private and Public Collections of Records, manuscripts, etc. ; (ii) *Akhbarat-i Darbar-i Mualla*.

C. (i) Architectural, Epigraphic and Numismatic Sources ; (ii) Art-objects and miscellaneous items.

A (i) *General historical works, memoirs and biographical dictionaries* : The general historical accounts of the Sultanate period, such as Minhaj's *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, and to a lesser extent, Barani's *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi* have materials relating to Bihar. The former, apart from its being the earliest general political account, is valuable because its author lived in the eastern region for some time and quotes eye-witness account of Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji's invasion and conquest of Bihar. It is our main source of information for the advent of Turkish rule in the

area and the activities of the Turkish *amirs*.

More specific and significant information is sometimes available in unexpected sources. Two good examples of this are provided by the fragmentary account of Mulla Taqiya² and Ikhtisan Dehlawi's *Basatinu'l Uns*.³ The former is based on direct personal information obtained during a journey to Bengal in the early sixteenth century during the course of which Mulla Taqiya examined the books in a library at Gaur and the papers of a *jagirdar* in Bihar, Nishat Khan. The account is very valuable on the points of political boundaries, early Turkish invasions on southern Bihar and Tirhut and the relations between the Delhi *Sultans* and Karnata rulers. The latter gives an eye-witness and fairly detailed account of Ghuyathu'd Din Tughlaq's invasion of Tirhut and its annexation. Rizquallah Mushtaqi's *Waqiat-i Mushtaqi* and Kabir's *Afsana-i Shahan* contain some anecdotes about events and personages of Bihar during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

In regard to the Mughal period, all the official histories from Abul Fazl's *Akbar Namah* to Muhammad Kazim's *Alamgir Namah*, contain references of varying length and substance to events in Bihar.⁴ For the later Mughal period, we have a larger amount of materials. Ghulam Husain Tabatabai's *Siyaru'l Muta'akhhirin*, Karam Ali's *Muzaffar Namah*, Ghulam Husain Salim's *Riayadu's Salatin*, Raja Kalyan Singh's *Khulasatu't Tawarikh*, etc. deal specifically with events in Bengal and Bihar, and the activities of the scions of local *zamindar* families.

The two royal memoirs, *Tuzuk-i Baburi* and *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, contain interesting references to Bihar. Babur's memoirs refer to the affairs of the decaying Nuhani kingdom of Bihar, the settlement of revenue of Bihar area, etc. The *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri* refers to the early Mughal invasions of Jharkhand, the mining of gold and diamonds there, and to some *jagirdars* in Bihar. The memoir of a lesser personage, Mizra Nathan's *Baharistan-i Ghaibi*,⁵ and another work, Khwaja Kamgar Hussini's *Maathir-i Jahangiri*,⁶ also contain unnoticed details about Bihar in the seventeenth century. A work of a different kind, *Tadhkira-i Salatin-i Chaghta*,⁷ gives considerable information about Bihar, not available elsewhere.

(ii) *Dasturu'l 'Amal*, Tracts on Revenue Matters (eighteenth century mainly), Glossaries of Technical Terms, etc.

Dasturu'l 'Amal, and the connected *Siyaq* (Accountancy) literature is now receiving increasing attention,⁸ particularly for regional studies. As we know, they generally provide information on the departmental organizations, powers and functions of officials, statistics of income and expenditure, papers maintained at different levels, different statistics about the *sarkars* and *mahals* of a *subah*, their *jama 'dami*, etc., tables of weights, units of measurements, routes to and distances between important towns, etc. The most well-known and frequently used such work, Abul Fazl's *A'in-i Akbari*, is the bed-rock of any study on the (originally constituted) twelve *subahs* of Mughal empire, including Bihar. But there are others too, providing a continuation of this type of information, though of a reduced range and in a less methodically arranged manner. The writers of these works often had actual experience of office work, and reproduced texts of different kinds of government orders, as specimens. This adds an archival value to such works.

A few such works⁹ available in the local Khuda Bakhsh Library may be noticed here. There is the anonymous eighteenth-century compilation, *Dasturu'l 'Amal-i Salatin-i Hind*,¹⁰ which contains statistical tables about the *sarkars* and *mahals* of Bihar, their *jama 'dami*, etc. There is another similar untitled, anonymous, early nineteenth-century compilation from which much can be obtained about Bihar in the late eighteenth century. Among other things, one of its sections, entitled *Kaifiyat-i Raj wa Zamindari Rajha-i Subah Bihar* and arranged *sarkar-wise*, gives brief accounts of the settlements of revenue, and of the settlement-holders since 1765. In some cases, very brief references are made to the previous local history of the area.

Another work,¹¹ prepared surprisingly by a *sajjadah nashin*, is something more than a *dasturu'l 'amal*, and has some materials more appropriate to the *adab* literature. This portion is valuable as reflecting the contemporary norms of social behaviour and economic enterprise.

The acquisition of *Diwani* by the East India Company (1765) indirectly led to the production of a new type of liter-

ature prepared mostly at the instance of European administrators and collectors of revenue. It consisted of tracts on land revenue matters, memoranda¹² on rights in lands, rates and figures of collections, glossaries of technical terms, etc. The volume of such literature is considerable, and its location spread over unexpected quarters including Marburg and Tübingen collections in the Federal Republic of Germany.¹³ S. Nurul Hasan has in a recent article drawn attention to some such tracts relating to the land-revenue set-up in Shahabad area of Bihar in the eighteenth century.¹⁴

Mention may also be made here of the glossary of technical terms prepared by Khwaja Yasin 'Ajiz in 1790 at the instance of James Grant.¹⁵ The compiler states that he did not want to produce just one more accountancy manual, of which there already were quite a few. Instead, he prepared a glossary of technical terms (alphabetically arranged) of terms mostly connected with land revenue administration. One of its distinctive features is that it also notices the regional variations in the meanings of some of the terms at such places as Delhi, Patna, Calcutta and Dacca.

It needs hardly to be stressed that the type of literature outlined above constitutes an invaluable source-material for a wide range of social and economic studies at the provincial level.

(iii) *Hagiological Literature* : The Sufic literature can be divided into three broad categories—(i) *Tadhkira*, or biographical notices of saints, (ii) *Malfudat*, or collections of discourses of saints, and (iii) *Maktubat*, or letters of the saints. Among these, the *Malfudat* constitute the bulk and are by far the most important from the point of view under discussion. They constitute a vast literature of a very mixed content. They represent a chronologically arranged summary of the discourses of saints relating to different topics, or the answers given by the saints to questions asked by disciples and others present in these meetings. The questions asked give us an idea of the problems exercising the minds of the common people in their day-to-day life. Studies based on such data would add new depth to our understanding of social life in medieval Bihar.

The collections of *Letters* are few. The letters are generally

addressed to disciples and relate to doctrinal matters, prayers, rituals, etc., but some of the *Sufis* were in correspondence with, or received written/oral information from *umara* and other minor local officers. Such letters illuminate dark corners of political history and provide authentic information on the important problem of the relations between the government and the *Sufis*, and the religious ideas of the rulers.

The Sufi literature is too vast to be noticed even in bare outline here, but only a few of the more important, and frequently used ones may be mentioned. Those relating to or emanating from the celebrated fourteenth-century saint of Bihar, Ahmad Sharafu'd Din Yahya Maneri¹⁶ (c. 1263-1381) are the largest and in many ways the richest. Unlike many other *Sufis*, he wrote much directly, and of his *Malfudat* too there are several collections covering different periods. Some of these are : (i) *Bahru'l Ma'ani* (containing discourses of 1356-58), *Ganji-La-Yafna* (1358-68), *Malfuzu's Safar* (1360-61) and *Munisu'l Muridin* (1373). These have been closely scanned by S. H. Askari, and their contents presented¹⁷ in his numerous articles. There are also the *Malfudat* of some other saints—*Ma'danu'l Israr* of the fifteenth-century saint *Qadin-A'la Shuttari* of northern Bihar, and *Manaqib-i Muhammadi* of Muhammad Qadri of the same period, who lived and worked in the southern area bordering on Chotanagpur.

In regard to Letters, too, those of Ahmad Sharafu'd Din Yahya Maneri are the largest and most informative. Of these there are several collections—the oldest being *Maktubat-i Sadi*.¹⁸ Those of the sixteenth-century saint Abdul Quddus Gangohi—*Maktubat-i Quddusia*—include some letters written to Humayun and throw light on some aspects of the contemporary political situation in eastern India.

(iv) *Epistolary collections and legal digests* : Epistolary collections, like the administrative manuals, are now receiving increasing attention. There is a large number of such collections, which can broadly be divided into two groups. Some were compiled by men who had literary rather than historical taste, and whose object was to present models of composition and letter-writing. Others were compiled by men with a service back-

ground, whose object was to prepare some sort of guide-books and manuals for office assistants and accountants. The two groups are not, however, mutually exclusive, and the contents of the works belonging to them often overlap. Their importance from our point of view lies in the fact that they often included the letters written by princes, *umara*, *sufis*, officials, etc., and reproduced texts of official documents, *fathnama*, *mahdar*, etc. The content of such collections is generally a mixed bag, but sometimes they contain letters mainly relating to the men and events of particular areas.

In regard to Bihar, fortunately, several such collections have already been brought to light, and obviously there would be many more. As early as 1938, S. H. Askari brought to light two collections of letters of *Lala* Ujagar Chand Ulfat, entitled *Insha-i Gharib* and *Insha-i Ulfat* providing new details about the political and social conditions in Bihar in the eighteenth century and about the famous Persian poet Shaikh Ali Hazin's visits to Patna, his disciples there, etc. He also introduced the contents of several other such collections, including *Ruqqa'at-i Hasan*, *Muntakhabu'l Insha* and *Inayat Namah-i Nasar*. The first work, though including letters mostly relating to events in Orissa in the latter half of the seventeenth century, also contains some relating to Bihar. The second one was compiled by one whose grandfather was closely connected with official life in Bihar under Nawab Alivardi Khan, to whom he was also perhaps related.

We also have two unnamed collections of letters¹⁹ belonging to the India Office Library, London, containing letters written by/to Shah Alam II, Shujauddaulah, Sirajuddaulah, Lord Vansittart, Raja Shitab Ra'i, Jagat Seth Mahtab Ra'i, and many others. The letters relate to such topics as the unpleasant relations between Nawab Mir Qasim and Shitab Ra'i and the attempts of the English to intercede on behalf of the latter, the role played by Shitab Ra'i in the tortuous diplomatic negotiations following the battle of Buxar, the conspiracy between Mir Jafar, Miran and Major Caillaud to assassinate Shah Alam II, etc.

As regards legal digests, the Maithili language-group of source-materials is particularly rich.²⁰ Owing, among other things, to a long-established tradition of Sanskrit learning and state

patronage, a number of scholars as well as administrators of Mithila, mostly Brahmans, continued contributing to different branches of religious and secular learning, including the compiling of legal digests. These relate to rituals, fasts and festivities, pilgrimages, gifts, charities, etc. and are particularly useful for a study of non-Muslim society. In using this literature one has to be careful in checking as to whether the compiler is just repeating the ideals of a period long past or also reflecting the contemporary situations or regional variations, etc. A close comparative study of these works, as also checking with other sources, can provide useful correctives.

(v) *Account of European Travellers and Factory Records* : The advent of the European Trading Companies, preceded by the visits of individual missionaries and merchants, led among other things, to the building up of an another quite distinct type of source-material, namely, the accounts of individual travellers²¹ and the records of the trading companies.^{20a} The importance of this group of source-material is further enhanced by the fact that it relates to an aspect not adequately covered by the types of sources in Persian, discussed in the preceding sections. It relates to such topics as, industrial and agricultural production, trade, prices of commodities, wages of workers, cost of transport, etc., and contains occasional observations about social practices, administrative system, rights in land, etc.

Theme-wise, they are, as a whole, invaluable for a study of economic history, but individually and unit-wise (records of the Dutch Trading Company or the English Trading Company, etc.) a particular account or records-series may be comparatively more relevant for a particular region than another. A research scholar looking for materials on Bihar will, for example, get more materials in Peter Mundy's²² or John Marshall's²³ account than, say, in Manucci's.²⁴ The Factory records would relate to the whole area covered by the operation of the Company concerned, and one would have to cull relevant materials.

The chief interest of the companies was naturally enough, in the prospects of trade, in finding out about the centres of production of different commodities, the prices in different areas, the cost of transporting the goods to the exporting

centres, the financing of the purchases, etc. The main focus of the records are on these aspects.

For Bihar specifically, among the English records, the series covering the correspondence between the Council of Patna Factory and that of Fort William, on the one hand, and the correspondence between Calcutta Council and the Court of Directors, on the other, constitute an important group. The records of the former series from 1704 to 1722 were edited by C. R. Wilson,²⁵ and these are invaluable for any student of the political-cum-commercial activities²⁶ of the Patna Factory of East India Company. Of the latter, a transcript of some India Office Records (Letters from the Council in Calcutta and others to the Court of Directors) is available locally at Patna.²⁷

There are some stray references in contemporary Persian chronicles and hagiological literature too.²⁸

B (i) Private and Public Collections of Records :

In Bihar, as in many other states, there were a large number of *zamindar* (land-owning) families whose origins can be traced back to the sixteenth century or even earlier. Possessing large estates over a long period of time, the scions of these families enjoyed considerable local influence and power, and are frequently mentioned in the medieval chronicles as *rajas*, *ra'is*, *zamindars*, etc. Their relations with the Mughal government varied from time to time. Many of them were suppressed by the Mughal *subahdars* during the course of the establishment of Mughal rule in Bihar but they were generally reinstated subject to the acceptance of Mughal authority. From time to time these local chiefs also defied Mughal authority and fought against the *subahdars*.

One result of their long contact with the Mughal government, both friendly and hostile, was the accumulation of a large varied collection of records,²⁹ such as *farmans* for grant of *mansabs*, *jagirs* or other honours, *nishans* or letters from princes or other type of communications regarding diverse political matters. Besides, there were the papers relating to their own *zamindaris*.

The families of Dumraon, Darbhanga,³⁰ Hathwa and Bettiah³¹ *rajs* are some of the more notable such families in Bihar. They

had fairly large and organized *Mahafiz Khana* (Record Rooms), preserving the family and estate papers. Some of these collections have recently been examined and utilized, though a lot of work still remains to be done. These records throw light on the rise and development of these families, the evolution of *zamindari* rights, the role played by members of these families in the general political history, etc.

There are also some printed accounts of the histories of some of these families based, among other things, on the family papers. Such works were prepared at the instance of the 'heads' of the family, and are generally laudatory, but they are very useful in so far as they reproduce the texts of many old documents. The *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainiya*,³² is particularly notable in this context; it reproduces many documents of the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries. Bihari Lal Fitrat's *Tawarikh-i-Fitrat 'urf Ai'na-i Tirhut*³³ and G. N. Dutt's long account³⁴ of the Hutwah Raj are some of the other such works. One may also mention here the few works on particular towns, the local monuments, etc. such as Muhammad Abu Saleh's *Tarikh-i-Saharam Nasiru'l Hukkam*.³⁵

Smaller private collections located in the district towns and interior areas are too many to be noticed here.³⁶ In educated land-owning families or in the *Khanqahs* and *Waqf* estates it was quite common to have collections of books and tracts on religion, literature, history, medicine, astrology, etc. An ubiquitous item in such collections was the *bayad* or notebook³⁷ maintained by different persons containing select verses of their choice or composition and miscellaneous notes. Sometimes these notes relate to topics of historical interest, and provide information not available elsewhere (personal information about eminent men, records of journeys undertaken by the compiler, list of *subahdars* with dates, etc.). Such collections often yield unexpected finds.³⁸

The *Khanqah* libraries are the natural repositories of the large mass of *Malfudat* literature noticed above.

Among the public collections of Persian records, those preserved in the District Record Rooms and in the State Archives at Patna (to which many of the district records have been recently transferred) are the largest and the most valuable. These relate

mostly to revenue settlements, grants of revenue-free assignments, land-resumption proceedings,³⁹ administration of estates under *Waqf* and Court of Ward, etc. The *Roobkari* (Proceedings) under Land-Resumption Regulations is a useful series containing information about earlier revenue-free assignments, family history, grants to and maintenance of charitable institutions, etc.

Many of the District Record Rooms had 'Double-Lock Almirahs'⁴⁰ which contained old revenue records in Persian which were of basic importance to the early East India Company administrators and collectors of revenue, and as such treated as very important and confidential. Some of the important such records were the *Bahi Hoshiyar Jung*, the *minha'i registers*^{40a}, etc.

(ii) *Akhbarat-i Darbar-i Mu'alla* (Newsletters of the Exalted Court) : The *Akhbarat* constitute a unique group of source-materials. These were a sort of Court of Bulletins containing the daily record of the Emperor's engagements and orders, appointments, promotions, demotions and transfers of officers, abstracts of news-reports and dispatches received from different parts of the kingdom and miscellaneous reports. The reports were prepared by official reporters immediately after the occurrence of the events. The entries were made by a set of scribes and checked by higher officers before submission of the draft for the emperor's approval. Containing as they did matters of interest to the ruling chiefs, *zamindars*, etc. copies were maintained in the *darbars* of the latter. All such collections are now, unfortunately, lost except those maintained in some of the Rajput kingdoms of medieval India, particularly the Jaipur State. These were first brought to notice by Sir Jadunath Sarkar in 1923.⁴¹ The utility of the *Akhbarat* is clearly brought out by a perusal of Sir Jadunath's *History of Aurangzeb*,⁴² and *The Fall of the Mughal Empire*,⁴³ and William Irvine's *The Later Mughals*.⁴⁴ There is still much which can be culled out of this large mass of records covering the period from the reign of Aurangzeb onwards. Sir Jadunath was mainly interested in the history of Aurangzeb's reign and the decline and downfall of the Mughal Empire, and has examined the *Akhbarat* from that angle. These can still be used from other angles—for

reconstructing bits and pieces of the provincial history of Bihar,⁴⁵ as also other *subahs*.

C. (i) *Architectural, Epigraphic⁴⁶ and Numismatic Sources* : As compared to the other categories, these are, if anything, more scarce, but even the little which is available has not received due attention.

The monuments are not only a reminder of the past, but also an index of the past. They reflect actual living conditions in a way in which the written sources—whether on paper, stone or metals—cannot. Fortunately, considerable information on the monuments is available. To begin with, there are the *Reports* prepared by Buchanan, which apart from other useful data also contain notices of some historically important sites, monuments and inscriptions. Then there are the departmental publications of the Archaeological Survey of India, of which Hamid Kuraishi's *List of Monuments of Bihar and Orissa*⁴⁷ is the most detailed in regard to the monuments of the medieval period. It has the advantage of being based on the earlier meticulous efforts of such great pioneers as Beglar, Block and Spooner. In the early fifties D. R. Patil, then Superintendent, Mid-Eastern Circle, Archaeological Survey of India, prepared a descriptive account⁴⁸ of archaeologically important sites, alphabetically arranged. It relates primarily to ancient sites but includes notices of some monuments of the medieval period too. It is based mainly on old published reports/notes, as also information supplied by other⁴⁹ workers in the field, and it presents in an arranged form upto-date information about antiquarian remains, monuments, inscriptions, etc. It also has a Table recording exact locations (latitude and longitude) of place-names occurring in Survey of India sheets, an index of inscriptions dated in different eras, including the *Hijri* era, and another one of monuments arranged category-wise caves, forts, bridges, etc. The work, unfortunately is not as much utilized as it should be.

In the early sixties Z. A. Desai prepared a critical survey⁵⁰ of Architecture in medieval Bihar, in which he examined some of the representative extant structures of the period. The survey is valuable because it goes beyond mere description, and

examines the growth of a regional style of architecture,⁵¹ and the changing phases of the influence of the imperial and Bengal styles in Bihar.

Numismatic Sources : Although Minhaj refers to the issuing of coins by Bakhtiyar Khalji in Lakhnauti, and Firishta more specifically refers to his issuing coins in Bihar, we do not have any extant specimens. Nor do we have coins issued from a mint in Bihar by the succeeding *amirs* and *Sultans* who held away over the area subsequently.⁵² It is reasonable to presume, however, that a mint was established in Biharsharif which was the political and administrative headquarters for such a long time. The first mint-town in Bihar, of which we have extant pre-Mughal coins, was Tughlaqpur 'urf Tirhut. Subsequently, with the constitution of *subahs* in 1580, Akbar established a mint in each of the *subahs*, including Bihar. The two mints in Bihar during the Mughal period, Patna/Azimabad/Patna, and Akbar-nagar (Rajmahal), were functioning regularly from 1580s⁵³ to the close of the eighteenth century, as is evidenced by the extant issues of the two mints spread over the period. Specimens are available in all three metals—gold, silver, copper, as also of the different types. These are available in the major collections, such as those of the British Museum, Lahore Museum, etc. In Bihar itself, there is a large collection of issues from these two mints, but they have remained unpublished so far.⁵⁴ The Patna Museum has some 10,000 coins of the medieval period, and these include the issues of the different *julus* (regnal years) of every single one of the Mughal emperors as also some pretenders⁵⁵ to the throne, such as, 'Azam and Kam bakhsh. The Chandradhari Museum, Darbhanga, too, has a good collection. More importantly, some of the *Raj Jawahar Khana* (Treasure Rooms) also have collections of coins of which the one at Bettiah is particularly rich and in some ways unique.

One can examine the purely numismatic aspect of these coins, their types,⁵⁶ weights, mint-marks, freak issues, etc. One can also examine such other questions as the state of import of bullion, trade-balance, etc. on the basis of quantitative study of the gold/silver issues of a particular period.⁵⁷

There is also the largely unexamined aspect of the study of

the departmental organization of the mints, and their work other⁵⁸ than minting of coins. Some of the *dastur'l 'amal* have sections on mints, describing the functions of different officers, procedures of work, etc.

For the later Mughal period, very valuable records in English are available in the *Proceedings* of the Mint Committee (Revenue Department), Calcutta. Just as the East India Company officials made comprehensive enquiries about the rates and modes of collection of land-revenue after the grant of *Diwani* to East India Company, similarly, they made enquiries regarding the working of mints and their officers, and the information is available in these *Proceedings*, which constitute an important source-material for the study of the working of mints in Bihar and adjacent areas.⁵⁹

In regard to the Patna Mint, detailed information is available regarding the place and building in which it was located, the functions, remunerations of different officers and, finally, its winding up in 1796.⁶⁰

A systematic study of the mints and coins of medieval Bihar based on some of the sources indicated above remains to be attempted.

(ii) *Art-objects and miscellaneous items*: A wide range of objects would come under this category, but I am mentioning only two rather unusual items just to underline the variety and importance of the information available from these.

A seventeenth-century cloth-painting depicting the siege of the fort of Palamau: The Mughal invasion of the Palamau area in the latter half of the seventeenth century represents the last phase of the extension of Mughal rule in Bihar. A stronghold of the Kharwars and Cherus, and the seat of the great Cheru ruler Medini Ra'i, the Palamau fort was besieged and conquered by Da'ud Khan Quraishi, the *subadar* of Bihar (1659-64) in 1664. The invasion has been described in some details in the two well-known Persian works—the *Padshah Namah* and *Alamgir Namah*—but all these details can hardly be a substitute for the live impression of the great siege provided by a unique cloth-painting,⁶¹ by an unknown artist. Measuring 30'×12', it depicts the different phases of the siege, the ramparts and other buildings of the fort,

uniforms and arms of the officers and soldiers on both sides, etc. Particularly noteworthy are the details of the arms carried by the Cheru soldiers, whose complexions have been shown in a distinct dark colour. The names of the more important figures have also been noted.

Seals and signets: In the official and inter-departmental correspondence seals played an important part, because the documents were not signed, and very often did not indicate the office of issue or the name of the writer. They are identifiable generally by their seal-impressions. There were a large number of seals of different shapes, sizes and materials; there were also fine small signets belonging to high officials and other eminent men.

Unlike the manuscripts and records, hardly any attention has been paid to seals and signets and sigillography is a sadly neglected branch of study so far as the medieval period is concerned. Very few seals seem to have survived. Being made of gold and silver and inlaid with precious stones, these were treated more as ornaments and perhaps got disposed off by indigent members of the family.

It is evident from the outline given above that we have a large scattered mass of source-material for the history of medieval Bihar. Much of it is contemporaneous and hence dependable. Also, it is variegated, being of different types and in different languages. This enables a greater degree of cross-checking, which is a matter of great advantage to those interested in the subject. The main difficulty is the rather diffused nature of the material, and its inaccessibility. The bulk of it is available in private collections, unarranged and difficult to get access to.

In regard to the utilization, as also the discovery, of these sources, S. H. Askari has played the most important pioneering role. An outstanding scholar, he is also an intrepid explorer. During the last four decades he travelled extensively all over the state and discovered and published numerous manuscripts, records and inscriptions. Particularly valuable has been his service in regard to the discovery and utilization of Sufic literature. K. K. Datta made good use of the English and some non-English

sources covering the later part of eighteenth century. J. N. Sarkar closely scanned these and some other sources relating to the economic history of the period.

Upendra Thakur and Radhakrishna Chaudhary have made good use of non-Persian literary and epigraphic materials, particularly those relating to Mithila, as also the epigraphic evidence. Rajiv Nain Prasad and Brahmadeva Prasad Ambasthya have examined the Dumraon Raj papers, and Jata Shanker Jha, the Darbhanga Raj papers. Kumar Suresh Singh has turned his attention to a virtually virgin field of source-material—the tribal languages and folklores.

Extent of utilization: Category-wise, *A* (i), (iv, partly) and (v), and *B* (ii) have been frequently utilized. These are, for one thing, comparatively easily available. *A* (ii), (iii), (iv) and *B* (i) are now receiving greater attention, though the problem of accessibility and the difficulties of language act as a great restraint in their more effective utilization. In regard to *A* (iii) particularly, what is often happening is that the details culled by S. H. Askari are being repeated with or without acknowledgement without any attempt to re-examine the source directly, *C* (i) and (ii) have remained mostly neglected. This is all the more regrettable as these may be characterized as more 'perishable' sources, because they lie uncovered and neglected and are disappearing and otherwise getting lost rather fast.

An urgent need is first to get the scattered materials centralized and microfilmed/xeroxed as far as possible. The next step would be to have some of these calendared and catalogued. The chronologically arranged *Malfudat* are particularly amenable to such a treatment. There is also the wider problem of preparing standard texts of the more important manuscripts, of getting the coins collections catalogued, the unnoticed monuments listed, and of enlarging the activities of such bodies as the Regional Records Survey Committee⁹² so that a wider awareness is created among the people regarding the importance of antiquarian remains and collections of books and records. Hopefully, all this would take form in due course, and help the numerous workers in the field to add new dimensions to the study of medieval Bihar.

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- ¹ The topics mentioned here are only by way of illustration.
- ² While in the service of Abdur Rahim Khan-i Khanan, *Mulla Taqiya* had travelled from Janupur to Bengal through Bihar and written an account of his travel mentioning the affairs of Bengal and Bihar during Akbar's reign. For the history of the discovery of the *ms.* and extracts from it see *Ma'asir* (Urdu Monthly Journal), Patna, May-June, 1949.
- ³ For a detailed notice from this angle, see S. H. Askari's *Historical Value of Basatinu'l Uns*, a rare literary work of fourteenth-century *Journal of Bihar Research Society* (henceforth *JBRs*), XLVIII (i-iv), 1962.
- ⁴ Mainly based on these, S. H. Askari surveyed the history of Bihar under the Mughals from Babar down to Aurangzeb and in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, *vide* note below.
- ⁵ See my article, 'Mirza Nathan—A Memoirist of the 17th century' in Mohibbul Hasan (ed.), *Historians of Medieval India*, 1968, pp. 69-88.
- ⁶ Text edited by Azra Alavi, *Maathir-i Jahangiri*, 1978.
- ⁷ Text edited by Muzaffar Alam, *Tazkirat us-Salatin Chaghta*, 1980.
- ⁸ For a very succinct note on this literature, see Irfan Habib, *Agrarian System of Mughal India*, 1963, Bibliography, p. 412; also see S. R. Sharma's brief notices of such works, *Proceedings of Indian Historical Records Commission*, XV, 1938, pp. 146-48.
- ⁹ I am leaving out other, more well-known, works belonging to other collections, information on which is available in relevant published works.
- ¹⁰ One portion of it was noticed by me much earlier in an article published in *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, XXI, 1958, pp. 351-60.
- ¹¹ *Hidayatu'l Qawa'id* by Shah Hidayatullah Bihari *sajjadah nashin* of the famous Maner *khanqah*. The Khuda Bakhsh Library has a photostat copy of the Aligarh Muslim University Library *ms.* copy.
- ¹² Raja Shitab Rai, possessing wide experience of settlement matters was retained by the Controlling Committee of Revenue as *na'ib diwan* of Bihar from 1765 to 1772, and attended the meetings of the Committee as a sort of special invitee. He was often asked to prepare memoranda on such topics as the Qanungo's office, Settlement of revenue in Chotanagpur area, etc. See my article 'A Historical Account of Chotanagpur in the 18th Century by Raja Shitab Rai', *Journal of Historical Research* (Ranchi), 30 (1), 1960, pp. 1-13.
- ¹³ See S. Nurul Hasan, 'Three Studies of Zamindari System', *Medieval India: A Miscellany* (henceforth *MIAM*), I, pp. 233-39.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ See my article 'Meaning and Usage of Some Terms of Land Revenue Administration', *MIAM*, II, pp. 275-81.

- ¹⁶ His life and writings were first presented systematically in English by S. H. Askari in various articles, beginning from 1948. His life and ideas have also been incisively examined in a recent Ph.D. thesis (Patna University, 1980) by Paul Jackson.
- ¹⁷ These have often been repeated with or without acknowledgement in some recent articles in a sort of ritualistic homage to the importance of this source-material.
- ¹⁸ Paul Jackson, *Sharafuddin Maneri The Hundred Letters*, Paulist Press, New York, 1980, for a very illuminating English translation of these letters. The brief, meticulously prepared, 'Notes', explain and set in the perspective some of the more subtle and crucial ideas.
- ¹⁹ See my article in *Proceedings of Indian Historical Records Commission* (henceforth *PIHRC*), XXXV, 1960, pp. 11-22.
- ²⁰ Quite a few of these have been published. For details see U. Thakur, *History of Mithila*, 1956, and the chapters by B. P. Mazumdar and R. K. Chaudhary in S. H. Askari (ed.), *A Comprehensive History of Bihar*, Vol. II, pt. I.
- ^{20a} W. Foster (ed.), *Early Travels in India* (1583-1619), London, 1927. Besides, there are separate accounts, such as those of Bernier, Manucci, etc.
- ²¹ W. Foster (ed.), *The English Factories in India*, 1618-69 (13 volumes), Oxford, 1906-27; New Series edited by C. Fawcett, 1670-84, Oxford, 1936-55.
- ²² R. C. Temple (ed.), *Travels in Asia*, II, 1628-34, London, 1914.
- ²³ Shafaat Ahmad Khan (ed.), *John Marshall in India—Notes and Observations in Bengal*, 1668-72, London, 1927.
- ²⁴ Translated in English by W. Irvine (4 volumes), London, 1907.
- ²⁵ *The Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, London and Calcutta, 1895-1917, See also N. N. Raye, *Annals of the English in Bihar*.
- ²⁶ Vide my article of this title, to be published shortly in *JBRS*, 'L. N. Mishra Commemoration Volume', and my chapter ('Bihar Under Later Mughals', 1707-39) in *History of Bihar* II, Part II.
- ²⁷ They belong to Dr. K. K. Datta, and cover the period 1703-39. They have been used by him in his different articles and *Alivardi and His Times*.
- ²⁸ J. N. Sarkar in the course of his numerous articles published during the last four decades examined various aspects of the economic history of medieval Bihar. See J. N. Sarkar, *Glimpses of Medieval Bihar Economy*, 1978.
- ²⁹ See my article, 'Some Private and Public Collections of Records Relating to Bihar', K. S. Diehl (ed.), *Primary Printed and Manuscript Sources*, pp. 201-10, American Institute of Indian Studies, 1971.
- ³⁰⁻³¹ For a brief and introductory account of two of these collections,

- see my articles 'Origin and Growth of the Darbhanga Raj, 1574-1666, based on some contemporary unpublished Records' and 'Some Historical Records Series in the Bettiah Raj Archives', *PIHRC*, XXVI, 1961, pp. 89-98 and *ibid.*, XXVII, 1962, pp. 8-13. For the Darbhanga Records, see also J. S. Jha, 'History of Darbhanga Raj', *JBRS*, XLVIII (I-IV), 1962, pp. 14-104.
- ³² Munshi Vinayak Prasad, *Tawarikh-i-Ujjainiya*, I-IV, 1898.
- ³³ Published in 1880:
- ³⁴ 'History of the Hutwah Raj', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, LXXIII, 1904, pp. 178-226.
- ³⁵ Published in *AH*, 1337 (A.D. 1918-19).
- ³⁶ Many of these were discovered and reported by S. H. Askari and myself during our tours as members of the Regional Records Survey Committee, Bihar and details can be seen in the *Annual Reports* of the Committee from 1954 onwards.
- ³⁷ For an idea of the value and contents of such works, see S. H. Askari's articles 'Historical contents of Three Scrap-books or Bayaz' and 'Majmua-i Yusufi—A Newly Discovered work of the Historian Yusuf Ali Khan', *PIHRC*, XXII, 1945, pp. 45-48, *ibid.*, XXIII, 1946, pp. 37-40.
- ³⁸ As for example, the discovery of the rare bi-lingual *sanad* of Raja Man Singh, vide S. H. Askari's article on the mausoleum of *Mamun Bhanja* at Hajipur, vide *Bengal Past and Present*, and Yasin Ajiz's Glossary of Technical Terms, referred to above.
- ³⁹ These have been critically examined in Kabindra Prasad Sinha's (unpublished) Ph.D. thesis (Bihar University), 'Revenue Administration of Bihar with particular reference to the Land-Resumption Proceedings, 1793-1858'. These had two separate locks whose keys were with the Keeper of Records and the Magistrate in charge of the Record Room, and could be opened in their joint presence.
- ⁴⁰ For details of these, see my article 'A Note on Some Valuable Persian Papers in the Muzaffarpur Collectorate', *JBRS*, XLI, 1955, pp. 512-18.
- ⁴¹ For details see Maharaj Kumar Dr. Raghubir Sinha, 'Transcripts from Records in the Jaipur State Archives', *PIHRC*, XV, 1938, pp. 12-20.
- ⁴²⁻⁴³ Vols. I-V, Calcutta, 1912-24 ; Vols. I-IV, Calcutta, 1932-50.
- ⁴⁴ Vols. I-II, edited by J. N. Sarkar, Calcutta, 1922.
- ⁴⁵ Sir Jadunath seemed to be himself aware of this aspect, for he got some entries relating to Bihar and Bengal bound in a separate volume. See Sir Jadunath's papers preserved in the National Library, Calcutta.
- ⁴⁶ This has been noticed separately.
- ⁴⁷ Volume II, New Imperial Series, *ASI*, 1931.

- ⁴⁸ D. R. Patil, *The Antiquarian Remains in Bihar*, K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna, 1963.
- ⁴⁹ Additional information was supplied by Dr. Sitaram Roy and myself, both of us being Research Fellows in the Jayaswal Institute at the time, and it was included as *Supplement*.
- ⁵⁰ Originally written as a chapter for *History of Bihar*, Vol. II, it has since been published independently, *Islamic Culture*, 46(1), 1972, pp. 17-38.
- ⁵¹ In his various articles on the inscriptions of medieval Bihar published in *EIAPS* and other journals, Z. A. Desai has also examined the growth of a distinct Bihar style of calligraphy.
- ⁵² Thomas (*The Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, London, 1871, pp. 168-69) refers to a coin of Fath Khan, son of Firuz Shah, dated 761/1359-60, of which the name of the mint-town has been read as *shahr-i* Patna, but this reading is by no means certain.
- ⁵³ For the period after 1580, there are regular issues.
A *shahruckhi* of Babar's reign has been ascribed to Patna mint (*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 16(NS) 1920, *Numismatic Supplement*, XXXIV, p. 212), but we do not know independently from any other source about a mint at Patna.
- ⁵⁴ For various reasons, even the tenure of the eminent numismatist P. L. Gupta as Curator, Patna Museum, could not see the completion of this important work.
- ⁵⁵ See my article 'Some Silver Coins of Two Pretenders to the Mughal Throne—Azam and Kam Bakhsh', *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India* (henceforth *JNSI*), XXV, 1963, pp. 59-64.
- ⁵⁶ To mention just a few which have hardly ever been noticed or discussed since they were first published long ago : (i) a gold coin of Muhammad bin Tughlaq dated 735/1334-5 from Tughlaqpur 'urf Tirlhut mint (published 1910) ; (ii) a gold *muhar* of Jahangir from Akbarnagar mint (of which we have silver coins, but not gold issues) [published 1915] ; (iii) silver coins of Shah Alam II, from Monghyr mint (of which other issues are not known) [published 1905].
- ⁵⁷ Aziza Hasan's *Mint Towns in Mughal Empire* is a good example of such an attempt.
- ⁵⁸ Among other things, the mints produced the beaten gold and silver threads for the famous *zari* industry. For a study of this aspect of Muhammadabad (Benares) mint see my 'The Benares Mint and Zari Industry', *JNSI*, XXV, 1963, pp. 87-92.
- ⁵⁹ See my article, 'An Historical Account of the Benares Mint in the later Mughal Period, 1732-76', *JNSI*, XXIII (Golden Jubilee Volume), 1961, pp. 196-215.
- ⁶⁰ See my article, 'The last Phase of the Patna Mint and its winding

up', *Indian Numismatic Chronicle*, Patna, 3(2) and 4(1), 1964-65, pp. 41-51.

- ⁶¹ The precious heirloom was sold away by some indigent member of the family to well-known art-collector of Gaya, Sri Mannulal. The family lived in Daudnagar (district Aurangabad), a township founded by Daud Khan Quraishi.
- ⁶² Under the dedicated guidance of K. K. Datta and S. H. Askari, two of its founder-members, and some self-effacing sincere workers and members, this body has done a great job of bringing to light numerous private collections of *mss.* and records all over the State. It also administers a National Archives of India sponsored scheme of National Register or Records. Under it proformas containing relevant particulars of important records are being collected from all over the country with a view to making the unnoticed information available to a larger group of scholars at a central place.

THE LITERARY SOURCE (MAITHILI) OF THE HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL BIHAR

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MODERN HISTORICAL RESEARCH generally tends to undervalue texts as source of history. But in the case of India, such texts have proved to be a very important source. And this is true of the history of Bihar as of other parts of India. Apart from the Sanskrit literature, the texts composed in Prakrit, Apabhramsa and local dialects have supplied a rich amount of materials for the reconstruction of the history of ancient and medieval Bihar. The present paper deals with the Prakrit and Apabhramsa texts, particularly the Maithili works.

One of the earliest sources of the history of medieval Bihar is the *Prakritapainṅlam* (abbreviated *PPM*), which was compiled somewhere in eastern India and commented upon in Mithila. It is a comprehensive work on *Prakrita-Apabhramsa*, containing eulogies of kings and heroes, like Hammira, Jajjala, Chandeshvara, Haribhrahma and a host of other rulers and ministers. A few verses give us the fleeting pictures of the life and condition of ordinary people. In fact the events of daily life, sorrows and happiness of common folk, popular occupation and the ordinary lot of people figure prominently in early medieval Sanskrit poetry, *Charya* songs, *PP*, Jyotirishvara's *Varnaratnakara* (henceforth *VR*) and the Sanskrit and Maithili writings of Vidyapati of Mithila. Even the medieval Buddhist saints, composer of the *Charya* songs, drew large number of followers from the lower orders of society and they were loved and respected by them. Their outright denunciation of showy theism and criticism of the caste-ridden society gave them popular stature.

Avahatta-Apabhramsa was being cultivated in Mithila for a pretty long time and the tradition of historical poetry had not gone out of fashion. Vidyapati, the most outstanding figure in Maithili literature, also composed in *Avahatta-Apabhramsa* and one of the earliest and best of his compositions in *Avahatta* is his *Kirtilata* which has been subjected to rigorous criticism at the hand of a number of scholars. Even earlier than Vidyapati, Jyotirisvara (of the *VR* fame) represented the earliest Indo-Aryan prose in Maithili. There are enough literary materials in Maithili to enable us to reconstruct the cultural history of the period.

The *Panji* literature (mostly in palm-leaves) is a book giving particulars concerning kings, Brahmanas, Karana Kayasthas of Mithila and much useful information could be gathered from it. It is one of the most extraordinary series of records in existence and is composed of immense number of palm-leaves manuscripts. Only experienced *Panjikaras* can handle the record carefully. The panjis, compiled under royal orders in the fourteenth century A.D., constitute a wonderful record and Grierson called it a great achievement of the Maithilis. Its main aim was to preserve useful knowledge about all the families existing in Mithila. They are expressed in exact, logical, relevant and concise manner. They throw light on the social history of Mithila. The late Rasbehari Das (*Mithila Darpana*, Part II) and the late Ramanath Jha (*Mithila Brahmanon Ki Panji Vyavastha*, also in Maithili and summarily in English), Ghananand Jha (*Ghatakaraja*) and Major B. B. Varma (*Maithila Karana Kayastha Ka Panjika-Sarveksan*) have made critical studies of the Panji literature in their own ways. The latest one by Varma is the first scientific study on the subject, based mainly on the palm-leaf Manuscripts.¹ These palm-leaf *panjis* give us such titles as *Akshapatalika*, *Adhikari*, *Karana*, *Kanungo*, *Karyi*, *Khan*, *Chaudhary*, *Diwan*, *Nayaka*, *Thakkura*, *Mahattaka*, *Majumdara*, *Malik*, *Rauta*, *Laskara*, *Lekhi*, *Vaidya*, *Visvas*, *Shiqadara*, *Sarkar*, *Sahna*, *Sahi*, *Sena*, *Negi*, *Hazra*, etc. for the Karana Kayasthas (Varma, *op. cit.*). These are all administrative titles and indicate that most of the surnames, used today by various castes sprung out of the official titles.

The *PPM*² is a very important source for the study of the

history of Bihar in general and Mithila in particular. The Kalachuri King Karna and his son Yasabharna are frequently mentioned. The latter is said to have led two campaigns against Champaran after defeating Kasiraja, a fact supported by the Bheraghat Inscription of Alhanadevi.³ The Kalachuris had extended their authority up to north Bihar and Vigrahapala II of the Pala dynasty had married Yauvanasri, a Kalachuri princess. The *Kasiraja* of the *PPM* was Jayachandra whose minister Vidyadhara is also mentioned in it. The considerable power wielded by Chandeshvara, author of *Rajnitiratnakara* (abbreviated as *PR*) is mentioned in the verses composed in his praise by his protege, poet Haribrahmadeva. The verse is a panegyric on the poet's patron. In many respects the *PPM* supplements Vidyapati's *Purushapariksha* (henceforth *PP*). The *PR* and *VR* reflect the continuity of the traditional politics and society. The *RR* can be utilized for a study of the political ideas and institutions and the *VR* for a study of the proliferation of castes. The *VR* gives evidence of the effects of the Muslim rule on society.⁴ The *Paddhatīs* of Viresvara and Ramadatta and the *Nibandhas* of Chandeshvara still form the basis of social and religious life of Mithila.

The *VR* is encyclopaedic in character. The noises and sounds of the city through playing of all kinds of musical instruments, singing of ballads and songs, the shouts of the people, and all kinds of seemly and unseemly acts which would come to one's own sight in a city with its motley crowd are mentioned. Here we get an account of delicacies in medieval Mithila. We get not only a list of seventy-two Rajput clans but also of eighty-four siddhas and further mention of countries like Khorasan and Gandhara. There are descriptions of ships and river crafts, of *Vanikas* and elaborate account of the surroundings of a fort. In a nutshell it is a compendium of life and culture in medieval Bihar. It reminds us of *Manasollasa* and *Ain-i Akbari*. In the words of late Dr. S. K. Chatterji : "He (Jyotirishvara) takes us through the city, and gives us a little glimpse into ugliness that was in medieval Indian city he also gives us a romantic description of nobles, heroes and beautiful heroines He shows us round the court and tells

us who is who in the throng... and gives us an epitome of life in a Hindu court in the early part of the fourteenth century A.D. the kaleidoscopic view affords a valuable commentary on the epigraphic and other literary records of the contemporary and earlier periods.... All this goes to make this work a document of first rate importance in the study of culture in the early and mid-medieval times in northern India." (*Introduction*, in his edition of the text published from Calcutta, Asiatic Society of Bengal.) The *VR* tells us about luxury and poverty, old and established notions and institutions, the oddities and frivolities, the social inequality and so on. For filling up the gap of a real peoples' history of the period, we have to take recourse to these literary sources. The economic inequality led to the establishment of a resigned social attitude and it came to be embedded in the daily life of an ordinary Maithili. He had wholesome interest in life. He did not consider any aspect of life too low or beneath his notice. He tells us about knaves and beggars, low and vulgar fellows and also gives us a romantic descriptions of nobles, heroes and heroines perfect in their personal charms and accomplishments. He did not neglect the life in the countryside. This is perceptible in the vast mass of folk literature in Bihar in various languages.

The *PPM* and the *VR* throw sufficient light on the food habits of the people and the *VR* revels in describing the vegetarian dishes of Mithila. It also gives a list of thirty-two kinds of clothes, thirty varieties of costly clothes and twenty kinds of *desiyapattavastra* and thirteen types of *nirbhusanavastra*. Various kinds of tents are also mentioned including mosquito-curtain. The people of Mithila were adept in the use of betel leaves. Jyotirisvara has enumerated thirteen qualities of betel and has given a list of varieties of spices and betel-nuts imported from other places. Various items of trade and industries are mentioned in the *VR*. The weekly and bi-weekly *hatas* (markets) played a prominent part in moulding the rural economic life. Trade connections with Srikhandā, Malaya, Surat, Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Gujarat, Telengana, Katak, etc. are mentioned. Clothes were imported from Tanjore, Sylhet, Ajmer, Kanchi, Cho'a country, Kamrup, Bengal, Gujarat, Kathiawad, Telangana and

other places. Textile and dyeing industries seem to have been popular. Sewing, cap-making rope-making, basket-making, pottery, drum, musical instruments, leather industry, metal industry, bows, arrows, and arms etc. also find mention in the *VR*. The village economic life included *Chamar* (shoe-maker), *Lohar* (blacksmith), *Sonar* (goldsmith), *Kumhara* (potter), *Tanti* (weaver), etc. Jyotirishvara describes the peculiarities of women of hilly region, Kalinga, Vanga, Gauda, Madhyadesa, Malava, Gurjara, Sindh, Dravida, Madra, Pundra, Karnata, etc. His *Panchasayaka* (in Sanskrit) is not only a book on erotics but also deals with the methods of birth-control.

The most important literary source for the study of the history of medieval Bihar is Vidyapati. He remained attached to the Oinwara court for a long period and had contacts with a number of rulers (both Hindu and Muslim) of other places. He spent his time in the court of Dronvar King Puraditya after the disappearance of Sivasimha. His knowledge about the contemporary events must have been first-hand because we find him sharing the fate of his rulers in times of their happiness and sorrow. Most of the Hindu and Muslim characters of his writings are well-known historical personages. His works furnish us with a mass of information having bearing on the socio-economic and cultural life. His interest in politics seems to have been determined by his love for the kingdom of Mithila in which he took active part.

The *Kirtilata* furnishes abundant materials relating to the contemporary political and cultural history. It includes a description of Yoginipur (Delhi) and Jaunpur of Ibrahim Shah Sharqui. It is a work in Maithili Apabhramsa (as Vidyapati calls it) and throws a welcome light on the Turks and Turkish courts in India. Vidyapati's description of royal palace gives us an insight into the architectural design of the period. There are various architectural terms in the *Kirtilata* and it is evident that the old architectural tradition continued till his days. He makes a mention of the additions made therein by the Muslims, viz., *Khasadarbar*, *Darasadar*, *Namajgriha*, *Khavargriha*, *Soramagriha*, etc. The Sharquis seem to have drawn largely upon the old Indian tradition.

The continuous contacts achieved a remarkable synthesis. There is also a detailed account of palaces and temples in the *VR*. The Jaunpur architecture presented a blending of the Indian and Islamic style and it is here that the Hindu and Muslim architectural elements coalesce to form a new type of architecture.

The theme of this work is the political turmoil that prevailed in Mithila in the early days of the Oinwara rule.⁴ Bhogisvara, the eldest son of Rajpandita Kamesvara, was a fast friend of Firuz Shah Tuglaq. His younger brother Bhavasimha (patron of Chandesvara Thakur) got the kingdom divided. When Bhogisvara died, Bhavasimha's grandson, Arjuna Ray (immortalized by Vidyapati in his songs) and Ratnakar (grandson of Kamesvara's younger brother Harshana) hatched a conspiracy and got Ganesvara treacherously killed by Arslan. Arjuna was the son of Bhavasimha's eldest son Tripura, whose younger brother was Devasimha. In his *Likhanavali*, Vidyapati praises Puraditya as having killed in the battle-field the king, Arjuna, who had behaved inhumanly with his kinsmen. Arjuna was detected and ultimately his line became extinct. Devasimha ultimately succeeded as the ruler of the kingdom and after that Sivasimha became the overall master after the overthrow of Bhogisvara's line. Sivasimha fought against Bengal and Delhi. The *Kirtipataka* eulogises his victory. It begins with the details of the battle in which Sivasimha is shown fighting. The poet describes the beauty of the shining arms and weapons. The actual battle is then described. *Vajraghanta* was used to make the Sultan conscious of the situation. He has named commander Suraj, Rajanandana, Haradatta, Bhikhu, Pundamalla, Gopal Mallik, Jayasimha, Harihara, Rajadeva, Kedar Das, Sohana, Murari, Ramasimha, Prithvisimha, Vidu, Damodar, Jayranjan, Soma, Vidyadhara, Kamlakara, and other participants in the war led by Sivasimha against the Muslim Sultan, whose name, however, is missing as the manuscript is incomplete and scattered. The Bengal variety of swords was used in this battle.

There are references to a number of contemporary personalities in the writings of Vidyapati. We have references to a number of Muslim kings in his *Padavali*, for example, Gyasdeva (identified with Ghiyasuddin Azam of Bengal) and Alam

Shah (may be identified with Saint Nur Qutub Alam) who lived in the court of Gyasdeva. Vidyapati is believed to have visited Gyasdeva's court with a begging bowl for help in restoring the *status quo* in Mithila. He also mentions Nasrat Shah (grandson of Firuz Shah Tuqluq) of Delhi as Rai Nasrat Shah. Bijjaladeva Chauhan of the Patna State (Orissa) is also mentioned by Vidyapati in one of his Nepal poems, but it is doubtful because *Chandaldeipati Bijjalladeva* lived long after the time of Vidyapati. The *Padavali* contains a long list of rulers—Devasimha, Sivasimha, Padmasimha, Viswas Devi, Harisimha, Narasimha, Arjuna, Amara, Raghavasimha, Rudrasimha, Dhirasimha, Bhairavasimha and a host of other rulers and kings. He also mentions a list of ministers, viz., Achyuta, Mahesha, Ratidhara, Ratipati, Samkara, Rauta Rajadeva, Amritkara, Vachaspati and others. He also mentions Nasir Shah (Nasiruddin Mahmood Shah, grandson of Haji Ilyas) and calls him *Panchagaudesvara*. He uses *Surtana* for Gyasdeva and *Panchagaudesvara* for Nasir Shah. Ibrahim Shah Sharqui and a large number of persons are mentioned in the *Kirtilata*. Vidyapati's description of Jaunpur is without any admixture of the marvellous—the Sharqui capital in its best days. It mentions a large number of nationalities like Telanga, Chola, Kalinga, Bengal etc. He has also thrown light on the court etiquette and manners.

Vidyapati's writings owed their origin to the social needs of the people. His *Mahesavanis* and *Nacharis* depict the life of the common folk. Vidyapati holds that poverty brings the following evils—sin, theft, knavery, hunger, desire for the unobtained, complaining language, garrulity and unreasonable awkwardness, etc. His description of the marriage of Siva is a clear manifestation of the marriage rites then obtaining in Mithila and no aspect connected with it has escaped his notice. The marriage rites and ceremonies, dwelt at length by Jyotirisvara and Vidyapati, are prevalent even today and there has been a remarkable continuity of culture in so far as the Maithila way of life is concerned. Grierson has enumerated these ceremonies right from the beginning of *Lagan* (auspicious occasion for marriage) and the creation of a *Vivahamandapa*.⁵

Jyotirisvara and Vidyapati refer to the towns not only as

administrative and military centres but also as centres of trade and commerce. Towns like Kusumapur, Kosala, Ujjain, Kampila, Pandu, Gorakhpur, Kosambi, Yoginipur, Mathura, Salmalipur, Benares, Devagiri, Radha and others are also mentioned. The village life presented a scene of co-operation and amity. The villagers were mainly agriculturists and were without the sophisticated manners of the town-dwellers. The economic condition of common man was far from satisfactory and the contemporary vernacular poetry in various languages of Bihar gives us an insight into the pitiable condition of the workers and peasants. Forced labour was a common feature whereas slavery was also rampant. The lower orders were subjected to a number of hardships.

Vidyapati's *Purushapariksha* (henceforth *PP*), though a work in Sanskrit and a book of moral tales, illustrates with examples of ancient history and all of them are known historical characters. There are various historical tales from Chandragupta Maurya to Sivasimha. Vidyapati's ideas of history were based on the Puranas and contemporary literary evidence. His tales possess some historical truth. Here history has been presented in the form of didactic tales. The illustrative stories go back to the last Nanda emperor for which Vidyapati's main source is Visakhadatta. There are stories about the Maurya prince and adventurer, Muladeva, Sudraka, Vikramaditya and Lakshmanasena who leads his navy up the Ganges against the Gahadavalas. Hammira is portrayed as the model of compassion for giving asylum to a fugitive from Alauddin. The devotion of the Maithila princes to the ruler of Delhi exemplifies the feudal idea of loyalty. Malladeva (son of Nanyadeva) is represented as the cause of conflict between the kingdoms of Pithi and the Gahadavalas. It throws light on Harisimha's relation with the Yadava rulers of Devagiri, Bhoja, Jayachandra, kings of Gorakhpur, poet Umapatidhara, and a Maithila Karana Kayastha saint Bodhi Das. It also deals with Vidyapati's ideas on diplomacy. A critical study of the characters, presented in the *PP*, reveals to us that Vidyapati took into consideration only historical and literary personages of importance. He might have had access to the source now lost to us. Pre-eminently a staunch realist and a man of action, he

1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific requirements of the task.

The first of these is the fact that the
 government has been unable to
 maintain a stable exchange rate
 since 1947. This has led to a
 loss of confidence in the
 currency and a consequent
 depreciation of the value of
 the pound sterling. The
 second is the fact that the
 government has been unable to
 maintain a stable level of
 public expenditure. This has
 led to a loss of confidence in
 the government and a consequent
 increase in the level of
 public expenditure. The third
 is the fact that the
 government has been unable to
 maintain a stable level of
 public revenue. This has led
 to a loss of confidence in the
 government and a consequent
 increase in the level of
 public revenue.

[illegible]

...and the ... of ...

[illegible]

The national youth day the other day in the United States of America, youth were to parade down the great Washington Ave. of Berlin. They marched in great waves and in the big column in a happy mood of song and cheer. The youth were in the lead of the parade. The youth were in the lead of the parade. The youth were in the lead of the parade.

Nacharis and *Mahesvanis*, so popular among the common folk even today. The true picture of rural life and culture is depicted therein.

Among the typical *prasasti* literature (mixed Hindi-Sanskrit-Maithili-Brajbhasa-Allha) are : (i) *Srimatakhanda-walakulavrinoda* by Sona Kavi and Hema Kavi, containing an account, in eulogistic style, of the history of the Khandawala dynasty established in 1556 in Mithila. It is prefaced by a long introduction in prose by Jagdish Kavi. Here is an account of the dynastic history of the Khandawalas from Mahesh Thakur to Maharaj Rameshwar Singh ; (ii) *Sundar Virudavali* ; (iii) *Raghavavirudavali*, and (iv) *Madhavavirudavali* ; (v) *Mithilarajyaprapta-kavitavali* (by Sona Kavi) ; (vi) *Narendravijaya*, and (vii) *Khandawalakulavrinoda*, and Lal Dasa's *Virudavali* trace the genealogical account of the Khandawalas. In all these *prasastis* barring the *Virudavali* we get an account of the battle of Kandarpighat fought between Maharaj Narendrasingh of Darbhanga and the forces of Patna. No account of this battle is found in any contemporary Muslim sources, but some of these *prasastikaras* were eye-witnesses to the scene. Lal Kavi has also described the battle in details.⁸ Even the latest issue of the *Comprehensive History of Bihar* (modern period) does not make any mention of this battle though in literary accounts we have an eye-witness account of the same.

Even the Maithili folk songs refer to Mithila's contact with Kanauj, Delhi, Mathura, Morang, Tirhut, Gaya, Ayodhya, Kailash, Ailanga, Tailanga, Magadha, Monghyr, Udayachal, Nepal, Champaran, Kasi, Karnatpur, Orissa, Dwaraka, Brindavana and various others. Vidyapati was an important Gazetteer writer himself who gives an account of the important holy places in his *Bhuparikrama*. His *Danavakyavali* and *Likhnavali* contain an account of contemporary weights, measures and currency. The *Kirtilata* and the *VR* contain innumerable references to articles of different metals and to different sections of market assigned to dealers in gold, silver, bell-metal, alloy of eight metals, jugs, cups, jars, plates, etc.

For a study of the medieval history of north Bihar the sources are meagre. In the absence of any positive and classified source-material, we have to piece together a connected link of

history from various conflicting sources, and for this we have to ransack the volumes of historical literature—published and unpublished materials and other traditional sources. Even the literary sources are conflicting at a number of places. The fact remains that the writers and poets of Mithila make stray references to their rulers and their exploits. Even the colophons of various unpublished manuscripts noticed in different catalogues, contain important historical information and references. There are also some works which have nothing to do with history, yet their prologues, epilogues, and colophons often furnish valuable data regarding social, economic and cultural life of the people of the age to which they belong. We come across writings in Bhojpuri, Magahi, Maithili, and in corrupt *Avahatta-Apabhramsa* and mixed Sanskrit-Maithili-Brajbhasa reflecting on political, religious and social themes. Some of the contemporary medieval writings like the *VR* of Jyotirisvara and the *Kirtilata* of Vidyapati indicate the assimilation and adjustment processes between the Hindu and Muslim thinking. By nature, legends and folklores like Lorika and Salhesa, handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation change their content and, therefore, their meaning according to the spirit of the times, the mood of the age and the mentality of the recounters.⁹ That is also the case with Daka and Ghagha, two eminent persons of medieval Bihar.¹⁰ Even then legends and folklores constitute the bedrock of peoples' history, though most of them cannot be wholly relied upon unless they are backed by other circumstantial and contemporary evidences. These sources are exhaustive but an attempt has been made to present a critical study of the literary sources for the study of history of north Bihar during the medieval period. The sources reveal that the poets and writers were aware of the historical events of their times and they based their accounts on the then available sources now lost to us.

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¹ Three volumes of the Maithila Karana Kayastha Panji in palm-leaves have been donated by me to the National Library, Calcutta,

ARABIC AND PERSIAN INSCRIPTIONS AS SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL BIHAR

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INSCRIPTIONS are, in a way, the footprints of the preceding generations on the sands of Time. The wind of change has played havoc with these imprints and has obliterated many of them. It is our duty, and in our interest, to protect and preserve the few which have survived, for they very often are our only dependable guides in the less frequented areas of history. This is particularly true of the eastern region and provinces, which do not have separate historical accounts of their own. The few which we have are mostly of the latter part of the eighteenth century, some of them having being prepared at the instance of early British administrators who wanted limited specific type of information collected for them. The epigraphic sources for the study of this region, therefore, assume a greater additional importance.

As for Bihar, there are a large number of Arabic and Persian inscriptions throwing light on various aspects of its history during the medieval period. There are about 200 such inscriptions covering the period from the mid-thirteenth century to the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and for all we know there might be many more unnoticed ones.

The earliest systematic work in connection with the collection and study of the epigraphic sources of this region was done by H. Blochmann. His articles, published in the various issues of the *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*,¹ on the history and geography of medieval Bengal, in which he presented the texts of many unnoticed inscriptions and coins, will always remain

a valuable source of information to students of the regional history of eastern India. Blochmann's works is primarily concerned with the pre-Mughal history of Bengal, but he also published some of the earliest inscriptions of Bihar. The real pioneering work in the medieval epigraphy of Bihar was, however, done by S. H. Askari. Unlike Blochmann, to whom many of the inscriptions or their estampages were sent by workers in the field and local officers, S. H. Askari combines in himself the roles of the explorer and scholar. During the course of his extensive tours in the interior areas of the state he has discovered (some slabs were actually dug out by him in fields) a considerable number of inscriptions, and published their texts, though mostly without plates. On the basis of these discoveries, as also the available other texts, he first surveyed the history of pre-Mughal Bihar on the basis of epigraphic sources.² In recent years under the able supervision of Dr. Z. A. Desai, Superintending Epigraphist, Archaeological Survey of India, many Arabic and Persian inscriptions of Bihar have been listed in the volumes of the *Annual Report of Indian Epigraphy*, and quite a few of these have been edited by Dr. Desai and his colleagues. In regard to the inscriptions of the Mughal period not much systematic work has been done so far. Some forty years ago, Syed Muhammad published the texts of inscriptions set in the different mosques, mausoleums, etc., situated within Patna.³ Greatly helped by these useful earlier efforts, and carrying forward this line of work, I prepared a corpus of the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of medieval Bihar,⁴ in which the texts and English translations of some 200 Arabic and Persian inscriptions of Bihar were presented along with their plates.⁵ Similar work in regard to the inscriptions of the ancient period was done by R. K. Chaudhary.⁶

Happily, in regard to Bihar there has been a long constructive tradition of interest in, and recording of, the epigraphic evidence. As early as the sixteenth century Mulla Taqiya,⁷ whose rare diary contains fragmentary but completely unnoticed information on early medieval Bihar, showing a rare thoughtfulness, recorded the texts of some of the inscriptions he saw on the buildings there.⁸ The interest seems to have lagged, if not vanished

altogether, subsequently, so that in the early years of the eighteenth century Francis Buchanan in his well-known *Survey* felt constrained to remark, while writing about the almost vanished remains of what once was the official residence of the Mughal governors of Bihar—the *Chihil Sutoon* (Forty-pillared) Palace in Patna,—that 'the occupancy of men totally regardless of antiquity soon obliterates every trace (of the buildings) ... Chihil Sutoon (forty-pillared Hall), the palace of the Viceroys of Bihar ... which 50 years ago was in perfect preservation, and occupied by the king's son, can now scarcely be traced in a few detached positions However, some of the early British administrators showed interest in the collection and proper preservation of archaeological, numismatic and epigraphic evidence. A. M. Broadley, a civil servant in Bihar, not only conducted some excavations in Biharsharif but also collected the legends connected with some of the local shrines and took notes about the early history of the town. He also collected a large number of antiquities and housed them in a 'Bihar Museum' located in *mahalla* Bayleysarai, Biharsharif. Among the 'Muhammadian antiquities' in the Museum there were 30 inscriptions 'of great historical value'. The antiquities were transferred to the Indian Museum, Calcutta sometime in 1895-96. At the unofficial level too, some interest in local history and antiquities was evinced. The famous Urdu poet Ali Muhammad Shad Azimabadi (1846-1927) wrote a short history of Bihar which is notable from this point of view.⁹ It contained a descriptive account of some of the local monuments and reproduced the texts of the inscriptions set on some of them. A similar work was prepared on Sasaram by Abu Muslaq.¹⁰ The value of these works lies in the fact that they preserve an account of the monuments as they were some 100 years ago. We have the professionally more detailed and accurate descriptions in the concerned volumes of the Archaeological Survey of India *Reports*, but these relate to the bigger and more important buildings. Many of the structures covered by these Urdu books are not included in the ASI *Reports*.

The majority of inscriptions belongs to religious structure—mosques, mausoleums and *Imambaras*, which, perhaps, is natural since places of worship and burial usually exercise the imagina-

tion of man and evoke in him a feeling of awe and reverence. There are others on secular structures too—forts, bridges, inns, etc. Even the tablets set on religious structures seldom contain purely religious texts. These buildings were generally constructed at the instance of provincial officers or local *jagirdars*, and the information recorded in their tablets is of a general historical value—being mostly about the builder, his designation, the period of his posting in that area, his superiors, etc.

The majority of the inscriptions are *in situ*, but some generally of the pre-Mughal period have been kept in mosques and *dargahs* to which they do not belong. A few were transferred to the Indian Museum, Calcutta towards the close of the last century, and some more have been brought to the Patna Museum recently. In a couple of cases, relating to the pre-Mughal period, the slabs themselves are now lost but their texts are recorded in near-contemporary works.

Linguistically, we find that the majority of the inscriptions are in Persian, some are in Arabic or mixed Arabic-Persian, and one is bi-lingual, being in Persian and Sanskrit. During the earlier period, thirteenth-fourteenth centuries, Arabic is the main language of the inscriptions (prose mostly), thereafter Persian gains increasing ascendancy and from the second half of the sixteenth century it virtually replaces Arabic. Dynastywise, we find that the inscriptions of the Bengal Sultans, and of a few of the Delhi Sultans, are in Arabic; those of the Mughal rulers are almost all in Persian. Surprisingly, no Urdu inscription has been found, even of the later period when that language had come into greater use.

Though we are not directly concerned here with the calligraphic aspect,¹¹ it may be stated that the inscriptions under study provide beautiful specimens of the different scripts—*Naskh*, *Thulth* and *Nasta'liq*. The *Naskh* style was in greater use during the pre-Mughal period. The Tughlaq inscriptions are scribed in a style which Z. A. Desai calls *Thulth* of the Bihar variety. It is typical of the region, is not found in other parts of the country, and it lasted for about a century. The inscriptions of the Pathan rulers are paleographically rather poor, being carved in an inelegant *Naskh*. Also, they are very often carved on the less

durable sandstone, as against the black basalt used during other periods. The inscriptions of the Mughal period with a few exceptions are in the *Nasta'liq* script.

The inscriptions are distributed over the different parts of the state, but for obvious reasons they are concentrated in Bihar-sharif and Patna, the two earliest political centres and capital-towns. Rohtas, which was the seat of Raja Man Singh for a long time, also has many dated monuments, while at Rajmahal which served for some time as the capital of Bihar and Bengal both, many of the extant monuments have lost their tablets. The bulk of the inscriptions are located in the central, northern and eastern parts in that order. Chotanagpur area is represented by only one, but in many ways a unique one, of the mid-seventeenth century.¹² This is in accord with the known outline of the history of the region. It was virtually a *terra incognita* during the pre-Mughal period, and although subdued during the first quarter of the seventeenth century, the hold of the Mughal government was neither very firm nor widespread over the area.

A couple of rather obvious points may be stated at the outset before passing on to a detailed assessment of the information available from the epigraphs. The Arabic and Persian inscriptions of the medieval period are quite different from those of the ancient period in regard to material, scribing and the type and scope of information provided. In the earlier period, in addition to stone, other materials were used. We have, for example, the copper-plates recording the assignment of land-revenue and other kinds of grants which are such a valuable source-material and which contain quite a different kind of information. The Arabic and Persian inscriptions of the medieval period, on the other hand, are mostly on stone tablets set on buildings, tombs, bridges,¹³ etc. The scribing too is different, the letters not being incised but etched out above the surface of the slab. Secondly, the comparative abundance of chronicles and other written sources on paper has rendered the epigraphs a generally supplementary source-material for the medieval period. Within this limitation, however, the epigraphic evidence is still very valuable, and it enables us to fill up gaps, illumine dark corners and add up more depth and substance to regional and local history.

The information provided by these inscriptions varies for the different periods of the history of medieval Bihar. While those of the earlier part are very helpful in the context of the vexed question of the changing political boundaries of Bihar, and provide some new information on matters of administrative history, those of the later part are helpful in regard to the careers and activities of the high-ranking Mughal *mansabdars* and smaller functionaries associated with the *subah*, as also many of the poets, artists and artisans belonging to or living in its different parts. There also is a group of inscriptions, of the rajas of Kharagpur (Monghyr district), which has an importance of its own. The rajas figured prominently in the history of medieval Bihar, and represent the only family of landed aristocracy in Bihar of which we have some dated monuments from the 17th century onwards.

Any regional study of medieval Bihar has to tackle first the problem of its changing political boundaries. As we know, Bihar became virtually a separate political centre under Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji. The succeeding Lakhnauti chiefs and Sultans fought frequently against the Delhi Sultans for control over Bihar, which became a disputed frontier area between two independent kingdoms, exposed to their territorial conflicts. As a result, Bihar's territorial boundary fluctuated frequently during the period.

Contemporary chronicles refer to some of these changes but the inscriptions give us a more exact idea of the extent and sequence of these changes. The earliest extant inscriptions of Bihar are those of the Mamluk chiefs and early Sultans of Bengal.¹⁴ They indicate that in spite of the two eastern expeditions of Iltutmish in 1225 and 1230 to assert Delhi's supremacy, the arrangements made by him for the political and administrative separation of Bihar did not prove to be very successful or lasting. The efforts of his successors were equally unsuccessful.

These inscriptions also provide supplementary and confirmatory evidence about the stages of the growth of the Lakhnauti rulers' hold over Bihar, and new information about the early careers of some of these Mamluk chiefs. For example, the Begusarai (1293) and Lakhkhisarai (1297) inscriptions of

Sultan Ruknu'd-Din Kai'kaus of Bengal (1291-1301) throw some light on the controversial question of the identity of Sultan Shamsu'd-Din Firuz Shah (1301-22). If the identification of Firuz Aetigin¹⁵ mentioned in these two inscriptions as the *Nā'ib* of Sultan Kai'kaus in Bihar, with Sultan Shamsu'd-Din Shah, as suggested by K. R. Qanungo,¹⁶ is taken as correct, it would appear that Firuz Aetigin, like Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji before him, found his way to the throne of Lakhnauti via Bihar. But once established on the throne, he, again like Bakhtiyar Khalji, relegated Bihar to a secondary position. Perhaps the geographical and strategic factor—absence of a natural barrier in Bihar against an invading army from the west—had much to do with this.

Similar is the case with regard to the Bhagalpur inscription¹⁷ dated 1446-47 of Sultan Mahmud Shah (1442-59) of Bengal, mentioning the name of Khurshid Khan, *sar-i-naubat-i-ghair mahallian*. We know about two other earlier inscriptions of this general, from Gaur and Dacca, and we also know that he achieved notable military successes in the eastern and northern parts of the kingdom during the subsequent reign of Barbak Shah (1459-76). The Bhagalpur inscription is important because it traces back the career of Khurshid Khan to an earlier period. It indicates that he probably started his distinguished military career in the western border of the kingdom. Moreover, he is seen to be holding the designation, *sar-i-naubat-i-ghair mahallian*,¹⁸ over a rather long period of twenty years spread over the reigns of two Sultan.

The Tughlaq period (1320-1412), particularly its earlier part, witnessed in quick succession the establishment of the Tughlaq rule over northern and southern Bihar, the extension of Bengal's control, under Shamsu'd Din Ilyas Shah's rule (1342-57) over parts of north-eastern Bihar, and finally the thrusting back of Bengal's hold by Firuz Shah Tughlaq (1351-1388). The chronicles of course refer to the Tughlaq conquest of the Tirhut area, but the Bediban (1346)¹⁹ and Tajpur Basahi²⁰ (1373) inscriptions of Muhammad bin Tughlaq and Firuz Tughlaq provide a more accurate idea of the extent of the Tughlaq rule over north-

ern Bihar. The latter, which mentions the construction of a 'strong fort' in that place (Siwan district), is the earliest recorded indication that the Saran area enjoyed some military and administrative importance under the Tughlaqs. The first reference to Saran in a medieval Persian chronicle relates to the much later period of Husain Shah Sharqi (1448-1505).

The period following the death of Firuz Tughlaq (1388) witnessed the decline of the Tughlaq rule over Bihar, and its substitution by that of the Jaunpur and Bengal Sultans in the western and north-eastern parts respectively. It is only on the basis of the epigraphic evidence²¹ that some attempt can be made to determine the respective areas of their control, and to fill up the lacunae in the stray references in the chronicles. The picture as it emerges shows that even during the height of the Sharqi's power, the north-eastern part, particularly the area up to Bhagalpur, continued to be under the Bengal Sultans, while Dariya Khan Nuhani, who established the first ruling dynasty of medieval Bihar and whose period of virtually independent hold covers roughly the first quarter of the sixteenth century, held sway in the southern portion and the areas around Patna district. Subsequently, under the rule of Alau'd Din Husain Shah (1493-1519) Bengal's control spilled across the traditional boundaries of the Gandak and Ghaghra into eastern Uttar Pradesh, and for a time Patna too seemed to have been occupied by him.²² The situation did not remain static throughout the period, but fluctuated frequently.

With the conquest of the fort of Patna by Akbar (1574) and the constitution of Bihar as a *subah* (1580), the area became politically more stable, and during the Mughal period, interest shifts to other topics such as the relations between the Mughal *subahdars* and (other high *mansabdars* in the *subah*) and the local zamindars and chiefs, growth of commerce and industries, advent of European trading companies and its impact on the trade-pattern, etc. On the first point, new and supplementary information is provided by the inscriptions. In regard to many of the important *subahdars* (and other high ranking *mansabdars* in the *subah*)—such as Ibrahim Khan Kakar, Habib

Khan Sur, and Safdar Khan and Akbar Khan—the epigraphs indicate that their connections with Bihar, official or otherwise, was longer and closer than we know at present. A host of other minor officials—particularly their connections with Bihar—would have remained unknown but for the inscriptions. Not only do they record the names of officials absent in the chronicles, they also tell us something of the works of public utility done by them—the constructions of mosques, inns and bridges, digging of tanks and wells, construction of courts of justice, etc. The Khurrambad (district Bhojpur) inscription,²³ dated A.D. 1615, recording virtually the foundation of a township in the Shahaabad area in the early seventeenth century is historically very important. The founder Safdar Khan held *jagir* in the area, and Khurrambad was probably his 'manorial headquarters'. We do not know whether he held charge of the *subah*, but he was one of the leading *jagirdars* in Bihar during Jahangir's reign.²⁴ As such, an additional significance is lent to his work. It gives us some idea about the functioning of *jagirdars* within their *jagirs*, a point on which not very little is known. The same is true of the inscriptions of several generations of the rajas of Kharagpur (Monghyr district), one of the leading families of landed aristocracy in the *subah*. We also get references to non-political personages such as saints, poets, architects and artisans, etc. who either belonged to or had lived for some time in Bihar.²⁵

There is the very interesting but rather unnoticed bilingual (Persian and Sanskrit) Bhabua inscription of Sher Shah, dated (1545), recording the construction of a tank and a garden by one Yusuf, the *munsif* of the *pargana* of Chaund.²⁶ The Sanskrit text, beginning with compliments to Ganesa and dated in the Vikram Samvat 1599, gives the additional information that one Hemardarsen gave some donation for the work. The use of Hindi legends on the coins of Sher Shah (and Islam Shah too) is well known. The use of Sanskrit on this tablet set up on a structure raised by an important state officer shows that non-Persian languages were often used in other ways too.

The epigraphs also contain useful information in the context of administrative history. Some inscriptions of the pre-Mughal period refer to administrative and military designations which

are not mentioned in literary sources or the administrative manuals. The Bediban inscription, referred to above, mentions an officer bearing the designation *Qadi-i-Muhr-i-Khas*; the bi-inscriptional slab at Biharsharif, containing two inscriptions dated 1309 and 1359-60 on its two sides, refers to an officer called *Hajib-i-Hinduan*, and the Bhagalpur inscription dated 1446-47 designates Khurshid Khan as *sar-i-naubat-i-ghair mahallian*. The Akbarpur (at the foot of the Rohtas Hill) inscription of 1636 gives new information about the appurtenances of the office of the *qala'dar* of Rohtas in the mid-seventeenth century.

Epigraphic evidence is always contemporary or near contemporary, and specific. As such, it is generally more reliable than that provided by the chronicles, and often helps us to correct the literary data. The Patna inscription, dated 1741-42, recording the date of death of Shah Alimu'llah, the grandfather of the famous historian Ghulam Husain Khan Tabataba'i, shows how an otherwise careful historian like Ghulam Husain can commit an error about a matter concerning his own family. The matter itself is not very important, but as indicative of such possibilities the case is significant. Last but not least, the epigraphs are very useful in regard to orthography of place-names and proper names.

To sum up, there is a large number of Arabic and Persian inscriptions of Bihar which throw light on different aspects of the history of medieval Bihar. As a result of the efforts of different scholars, spread over the last hundred years, the great majority of these have been published and systematically edited with plates. There is, however, no finality about such work, and the possibility is always open—in fact, looked for by students of the regional history of Bihar—of fresh epigraphs being brought to light. The urgent need of the hour is to make systematic institutionalized attempts to explore, to preserve the inscriptions and to publish their text. Such work has been done in regard to a few regions and states, but remains to be taken up in regard to many other regions. The hope expressed towards the beginning of this century by J. Horowitz, a great pioneer in this field, that a day might come when lists of 'published

Mohamedan inscriptions' of different areas may be superseded and rendered superfluous 'by the appearance of a Corpus Inscriptionum Indo-Moslemicarum' still remains to be fulfilled.

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- ⁵ A.H. 642—1200, (hereinafter cited as *Corpus*), Patna, 1973.
- ⁶ R. K. Chaudhary, *Select Inscriptions of Bihar*, 1958.
- ⁷ Mulla Taqiya Shustari has been mentioned by the authors of the *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* and *Muntakhabu't Tawarikh*, and also by Jahangir, who gave him the title of *Muwwarikh Khan* in 1608. More interestingly, he was a follower of the *Din-i-Ilahi*. He had travelled from Jaunpur to Bengal and prepared an account of his travels and some of the affairs of Bengal and Bihar. It was based on personal information, the books he studied in a library at Gaur, and the private papers of a Mughal *jagirdar* in Bihar, Nishat Khan. Extracts from a copy of this work, dated 1023 (1614-15) were published in *The Maa'sir*, (an Urdu monthly magazine) Patna, May-June, 1949. Unfortunately, the manuscript is now lost, and copies of *The Maa'sir* too are not easily available.
- ⁸ Of the numerous travellers who subsequently visited Bihar hardly any one mentions anything about inscriptions, not to speak of copying their texts.
- ⁹ *Naqsh-i-Paidar* (Urdu), Patna, 18.
- ¹⁰ Abu Muhammad Muslak, *Tarikh-i-Sahasram Nasirul Hukkam*, Patna, A.H. 1337 (1918-19).
- ¹¹ For a general survey, see M. Ziauddin, *Moslem Calligraphy*, Calcutta, 1936.
- ¹² For details, see *Corpus*, pp. 230-32.
- ¹³ Inscriptions on smaller movable objects such as guns, swords, household objects, etc., form a separate category which is not being discussed here.
- ¹⁴ There are six of these, ranging from 1242 to 1315. For details, see *Corpus*, pp. 3-19.
- ¹⁵ The high-sounding titles used for him in the text include that of *Sikandar-us Sani* (the second Alexander). As we know, this was the title used by the great contemporary Khalji Sultan of Delhi,

Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316), its use by the Bengal Sultan's deputy in Bihar shows an attitude of defiance.

¹⁶ In Sir Jadunath Sarkar (ed.), *The History of Bengal*, II, Dacca University, 1948, p. 77.

¹⁷ See *Corpus*, pp. 93-96.

¹⁸ Vide *infra*, p. 18.

¹⁹ See *Corpus*, pp. 30-32.

²⁰ Edited by Z. A. Desai, *N. K. Bhattashahi Commemoration Volume*, Dacca, 1966, pp. 200-204 ; also see *Corpus*, pp. 57-59.

²¹ It may not always be quite conclusive but in the absence of other evidence it is our only source.

²² Vide his Patna and Barh inscriptions, both dated 1510-11 ; see *Corpus*, pp. 110-13.

²³ See *Corpus*, pp. 194-96, 208-211.

²⁴ He is frequently mentioned by Jahangir in the *Tuzuk*, (Rogers and Beveridge, Eng. tr., I, pp. 164, 167, 242, etc., see also *Maathiru'l Umara*, I, Persian text, II, pp. 736-38).

²⁵ Mention may also be made here of a rather unusual type of inscription at Patna City, dated 1804-5, recording the sudden death of the child of one Ghulam Muhiu'd Din of Meerut who happened to visit Patna in that year. This is a rare instance of the recording of a bereavement suffered by a common man, a casual visitor to the city, and its text conveys to us something of the poignancy of the shock suffered by the person.

²⁶ Belonging originally to Bhabua in the Bhojpur district, the epigraph is now preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. Z. A. Desai, for some reasons, did not include it in his article on some Arabic and Persian Inscriptions from the Indian Museum, Calcutta (*EIAPS*, 1955-56), nor has it been properly utilized in the works on Sher Shah Kuraish just published an English translation of the portions read but did not give the Persian reading or the plate (*EIM*, 1923-24) For a fuller reading and plate, see *Corpus*, pp. 136-40.

Modern Period

ARCHIVAL SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF MODERN BIHAR

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THE SOURCE-MATERIALS for the history of modern Bihar lie scattered in the different archives of India. But the Bihar State Central Records Office (SCRO) contains valuable documents and records for the reconstruction of the history of modern Bihar. Besides the SCRO, the West Bengal State Archives, and the National Archives of India also contain valuable records and documents for the study of the history of modern Bihar. Some materials are also available in the government archives in Bhubaneswar and Varanasi. The records relating to Bihar prior to the Movements of 1857-59 are to be found located in the different parts of the country. But the post-Mutiny records relating to Bihar have been mostly preserved in the Bihar State Archives at Patna.

Records relating to the British conquest of Bihar from 1757 to 1764 are available in the 'Secret' and 'Select Committee' Proceedings of the Governor and Council of Fort William. Preserved in the Foreign Department, records of this description are also found in the printed 'Bengal and Madras Records' of the same period, available in the National Archives of India as well as in the SCRO, Patna. The records relating to extension of British authority in Chotanagpur region of south Bihar are to be found in the 'Foreign Secret', 'Foreign Political' and 'Military' Department Proceedings in the National Archives of India. Microfilm copies of 'Foreign Secret' proceedings from 1757 to 1772 are available in the SCRO, Patna. In the 'Foreign Secret', 'Foreign Political'

and 'Military' Department records of the National Archives of India are also to be found the original materials with bearing on Anglo-Maratha relations on the south-west frontiers of Bihar and Anglo-Nepalese relations in its northern frontiers, particularly during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. The 'Home Public' series of records in the National Archives of India covering the whole of the East India Company's period contain valuable materials regarding trade, administration, politics and cultural activities in Bihar during that period. The 'Home Revenue' and 'Home Miscellaneous' series of records in the National Archives of India from 1834 to 1858 also contain useful references relating to Bihar, particularly in the field of agrarian history.

The records of the Chief and Council at Patna, who were responsible for the administration of revenue and commerce of Bihar from 1765 to 1772 are preserved in the West Bengal State Archives. The records of Bengal Revenue Department from 1772 to 1858 and of Bengal Judicial Department, both civil and criminal, from 1790 to 1858 preserved in the West Bengal State Archives are rich source-materials for the study of the administrative, social and economic history of Bihar during the East India Company's rule.

The records of the *Sadar Diwani* and *Nizamat Adalats*, preserved in the Calcutta High Court also contain valuable information regarding the social condition in Bihar in the nineteenth century up to 1862. Some volumes of printed reports on the cases decided by these *Adalats* are also available in the SCRO, Patna. Some records of the Calcutta High Court relating to Bihar in the nineteenth century are also to be found in the Patna High Court.

The records of the Provincial Council of Revenue at Patna from 1772 to 1781 and those relating to Bihar of the Board of Revenue in Calcutta up to 1793 are available in the record room of the Bihar Board of Revenue at Patna. These records are highly informative on the system of revenue administration that obtained in Bihar prior to the Permanent Settlement as also on the genesis of Permanent Settlement, which was actually first experimented in Bihar and then extended to the rest of the

Presidency. The Board of Revenue at Patna also contains records relating to the revenue administration of Bihar after 1859.

The SCRO, Patna is the major repository of official records in Bihar. The bulk of its holdings are in English, dating from the eighteenth century, and extending well into the twentieth century. They consist primarily of the vast correspondence which flowed between the subdivisional and district officers, executive, revenue and judicial and their subordinates, and ultimately to the highest officers of the Province and the country. These records reflect mostly the government point of view and as such they may be carefully used. The major headings of the annual reports submitted by the local authorities indicate information on a wide variety of subjects like weather and crops, material condition of the people, migration, manufactures and mines, trade and commerce, state of public feeling, public press, police and crime, civil justice, land revenue, schools, and conduct of land-holders.

Bulk of the correspondence of the Bihar administration has been preserved in bound volumes entitled Consultations or Proceedings, which are arranged in chronological sequence. Proceedings Volumes prior to 1860 are mostly hand-written. Later they were printed. These Proceedings Volumes are arranged by Departments. At the SCRO the Bihar Volumes before 1859 are divided according to the three departments which were then in existence, Revenue, Judicial and General, and their various branches. The Revenue department included Land Revenue, Agriculture, and Famine. Likewise Judicial was made up of several branches, Police, Jails, and Political etc. After 1859 additional departments were created, such as Legislative in 1873, Finance in 1878, and Municipal in 1880.

The Proceedings after 1860 are further classified into 'A' and 'B'. The former comprises materials that were considered of sufficient administrative importance to warrant printing up. The latter remained in manuscript, often at the local level. They were, however, summarized very briefly in the 'A' Proceedings. The Bengal Judicial Proceedings of November-December, 1868 lists at its 'B' records, petitions of various kinds, from a woman seeking remission of her husband's sentence, to peasants complaining of harassment from indigo-planters.

Although 'A' Proceedings contain valuable information and have been widely utilized by researchers, they do not always provide detailed information because they were intended to record important administrative deliberations of the Provincial or Central Government. That is why local information was generally avoided. Even the bound volumes of 'A' Proceedings are not complete transcriptions of the relevant correspondence which are collected in *bastas* or bundles.

Again some part of the 'A' papers were never printed in the Proceedings Volumes because they were supposed to be confidential. These include the personal memoranda and intra-office notes and were designated as 'k.w' or 'keep with'. These 'k.w's' give us information about the private bias of officers and also help to identify the person responsible for drafting a specific legislation or minute.

Accounts of local affairs are also available in the 'B' Proceedings and reports pertain primarily to the late nineteenth century. There are 8 *bastas* of Land Revenue branch, 2 of Agriculture, 1 of Registration, 1 of Famine, 8 of Judicial, 4 of Police, 3 of General, 2 of Education, 1 of Scarcity and Relief, 1 of Finance, 1 of Ferries, 9 of Municipal, 1 of Local Self-Government and 1 of Medical.

The *bastas* of Land Revenue branch contain petitions from important Bihar land-holders and correspondence on various land disputes. A file in the Agriculture *basta* contains a survey of indigo cultivation in Bihar. The Judicial *bastas* contain petitions from peasants, professional classes, land-holders covering a large variety of issues. There are also files relating to the recurring disturbances among the tribal Santhals in the late nineteenth century. Some of these documents supplement the information given in 'A' Proceedings and provide good material for reconstructing the social history of the area.

The SCRO also contains over 500 bound volumes of Patna Commissioner's Office Records dating to the early nineteenth century. These include correspondence from diverse sources, for example, the District Collectors, the Board of Customs, the Superintendent of Government Estates, Civil Auditor, the Thuggee and Dacoity Department etc. There also exist near about a hundred

bastas pertaining to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. These are classified into General and Revenue collection. Only selected few documents of this collection have been reproduced in the Proceedings Volumes for reasons best known to the authorities. Among the conspicuous omissions has been cited the case of Hathwa Raj in Saran district detailed references to which are available in the Bengal Revenue Proceedings of December, 1879 and February, 1880. These volumes contain big lists of peasants who deserted their villages and their economic and social status. The correspondence between the various levels of government and with the Maharaja of Hathwa can also be found in these volumes. The *bastas* of Patna Commissioner's Office Records also contain ample materials with regard to local affairs. The files deal with local riots, partition cases, local opinions on how to classify land tenures, and petitions and letters from various local organizations.

In view of the increasing emphasis on regional history and area study district-wise study is becoming increasingly popular. For that purpose also the SCRO offers a convenient starting place. The Patna Commissioners Office Records contain extensive collections regarding specific districts besides collections of old English records from several collectorates. These volumes of correspondence between subdivisonal and district officers, and to their subordinates were originally kept in the district records offices. But the following records have now been transferred to the SCRO :

(a) Bhagalpur Collectorate Records from	1770 to 1900
(b) Champaran " " "	1837 to 1900
(c) Gaya " " "	1842 to 1900
(d) Hazaribagh " " "	1834 to 1876
(e) Monghyr " " "	1782 to 1869
(f) Ranchi " " "	1837 to 1900
(g) Saran " " "	1779 to —
(h) Shahabad " " "	1781 to 1800

These records give detailed information about almost every aspect of that district's past history. The district records offices still contain valuable materials in the shape of collectorate records, judicial (civil and criminal) proceedings and records of

the local bodies. Although many of them are still consulted by the general public, local lawyers and administrators, they have been largely ignored by research scholars. Dr. K. K. Datta has compiled and edited selections from unpublished correspondences of the Judge-Magistrate and the Judge of Patna, 1790-1857, which give us information on subjects like education, *sati* and widow remarriage and Christian missionaries. But these selections are subjective and as such there are several gaps. Dr. J. S. Jha has listed all the materials available in those *bastas* from 1820 to 1825 in Records of District Judge-Magistrate of Patna compiled and edited by him. P. C. Roy Choudhury's *Sarkar Saran* is also based on records from 1785 to 1866. Other works like J. R. Hand's *Early English Administration of Bihar*, J.F.W. James' *Selections from the Correspondence of the Revenue Chief of Bihar* (1781-86) and *Selections from the Judicial Records of Bhagalpur District Office, 1793 to 1805* are based on the materials found in the district record offices, which also contain wide range of village level materials in vernacular languages like *Kaithi*, Urdu, Hindi etc.

The materials stem largely from the survey and settlements of Bihar districts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Generally speaking, each of the district records rooms contains the following documents :

- (a) *Khewat* and *Khatian* along with *Khesra* number. The *Khewat* shows the proprietary interests and the interests of all tenancies above that of the *Raiyat*. The *Khatian* provides a detailed record for each separate holding of the plots comprising it.
- (b) *Khesra* and map of the village. The *khesra* indicates the actual plot in a village, identifying its crop.
- (c) The volume containing registers of sales and mortgages of proprietary and occupancy rights.
- (d) Village notes and important papers relating to entries of rents especially when disputed.
- (e) Records relating to boundary dispute cases and others.
- (f) Records related with irrigation, if any.

Besides serving their direct purpose these records can also

be helpful in reconstructing the agricultural, social and economic life of the rural people of Bihar.

Also available in the district records room is village to village information in the form of 'village notes'. Patna and Saran district offices, for example, contain such materials. There are 2,595 *mauza* notes in Patna and 4,883 in Saran district record office. These are bound together in volumes arranged by *thanas*. Each village note consists of 5 pages and contains 15 entries. The information given in it relates to population, caste, land-rights and rents, markets, soil and irrigation etc. Sometime information regarding rural credit, schools, literacy, migration is also given.

Besides the SCRO a few big estates also maintained their records rooms, which contained valuable documents concerned with those estates. These were Hathwa, Darbhanga and Bettiah and researchers working on these areas find very useful materials therein. The Hathwa Raj *Mahafiz Khana* (records room) contains English and Persian records besides vernacular materials belonging to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The series of the records are broken and have been arranged under the following heads: rent, settlement, criminal cases and miscellaneous petitions. Information is also available with regard to accounts, cess, establishment, furniture, loan, palace, stable, stationery, jewels etc.

Among the records preserved there are not only personal letters from Maharajas and indigo-planters, but also petitions from the ordinary inhabitants of the estate. A good portion of the English records deal with the estates' relations with indigo-planters. Then there are four diaries of managers of the Raj. Although these diaries deal mainly with administrative matters, they also contain materials on social and economic condition of the people in that estate.

The Darbhanga Raj *Mahafiz Khana* has now been converted into a unit of the Bihar State Archives and has been put under government management. It contains continuous series of official and semi-official records relating to the ruling house of the Raj going back to the early Mughal period. These records are in English and Persian both kept in separate rooms. The series

of English records begins from 1860 the years when the Raj came under the Court of Wards and English was introduced as official language in the estate. They extend up to 1950's. Records of the previous period are in Persian. The Persian records are arranged *pargana*-wise. Among the Persian records there is a large number of *farmans* and *sanads* of Mughal emperors from A'bar onwards and *subedars* of Bihar. These documents give us new and important information regarding the origin and development of the Raj, its exact constitutional position vis-a-vis the Central Government. They also furnish information about the various local officers and personalities of Bihar during the Mughal period. Also can be found there copies of court proceedings of civil suits, which incidentally relate to certain events of historical importance and give some information about the families which at one time exercised political authority.

The English records were divided under 36 heads during the period of the Court of Wards (1860-78). After that period these records were divided into four departments—General, Revenue, Law and Accounts. In 1922-23 a new system of arrangement was introduced. It was circle-wise, department-wise and agency-wise. There were 17 revenue circles and 9 agents' offices. The records of the General and Revenue Departments give us information of historical importance. From the educational papers we get an idea of the state of education among the raiyats and the efforts made by the Raj for its further spread. Returns, reports, diaries of the Raj officers and miscellaneous papers also furnish us with information about the condition of the people and crops and the state of collections.

The Raj archives contain the largest collection of revenue papers. From the papers we get an idea of the land revenue administration of the Raj. For the purpose of collecting revenues the Raj was divided into 17 circles. But later the circles were found to be too large for one man, and about the year 1875 a new system was adopted, according to which sub-managers were appointed in each circle while all important matters were to be sent up for the manager's orders.

There can also be found Annual Administrative Reports from 1866 onwards, throwing light on all aspects of the Raj

administration such as Survey Reports, and papers regarding the various indigo concerns on the estate. There are also some private letters from A. O. Hume to Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh Bahadur. These letters indicate the financial difficulties of the Indian National Congress during the early years of its existence and the Maharaja's liberal donation. Incidentally these letters refer to other important events also.

A similar range of records exists in the Bettiah Raj archives. The collection there contains records of correspondence relating to indigo-planters and plantations, estate management, border disputes with Nepal and papers showing the estate's relation with local British administration.

Recently a branch of the Bihar State Archives has also been established in Ranchi for collecting and preserving records relating to Chotanagpur area. The missionary establishments of Chotanagpur also contain valuable records, which throw light on the social and economic condition of the people of that area. Since a good number of estates in Bihar were under the Courts of Wards for varying periods of time, information regarding them can be had from the Wards' *bastas* in SCRO. These are arranged both district-wise and estate-wise.

Some valuable private papers are also preserved in the SCRO. For example, papers relating to Mahatma Gandhi's role during indigo disturbances in Champaran are available here. The private papers of Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Sri Jaglal Chaudhary are available in the National Archives of India. Dr. Prasad's collection contains valuable information on almost every subject of academic interest and give us insight into the different phases of the freedom movement in this state and in the country as a whole.

By far the richest repository of records the SCRO also contains important series of records belonging to the Political (Special) Department (1912 to 1947) which largely deal with letters concerning law and order of the Provincial Government and are full of information concerning the freedom struggle in Bihar. Another set of records in the form of "Character Rolls" of various government officials from the British days are also interesting for biographical studies and their impact on affairs of the government and administration. No less important is the

proceedings of the Council of Ministers preserved in the SCRO, which have to be consulted very judiciously because they have to be tallied with Departmental records of the concerned agenda.

In a developing society records relating to Development Departments in post-independence era such as P.W.D., Irrigation, River Valley Project etc. also deserve careful study which of course are only opened up to 30 years progressively. New activities like Statistical Collections, Election organizations, Public Relations, Tourism etc. also unfold large vista of information but have to be used carefully.

Given below is a classified list of records series available in the SCRO, Patna, on the basis of which considerable research work has been done and is being done.

(A) SECRETARIAT DEPARTMENT RECORDS
(Old Secretariat Repository)

(1) Education Department—1859-1949

(a) Education	1859-1949
(b) Miscellaneous	1861-1949
(c) Ecclesiastical	1868-1922
(d) Archaeological	1912-1922
(e) Emigration	1859-1912

(2) Political Department—1859-1961

(a) Political & General	1859-1961
(b) Police	1859-1961
(c) Miscellaneous	1912-1922

(3) Revenue Department—1859-1960

(a) Land Revenue	1859-1960
(b) Forest	1864-1960
(c) Miscellaneous	1859-1960
(d) Books, & Library	1912-1922
(e) General	1912-1922
(f) Census	1912-1922
(g) Land Acquisition	1906-1911
(h) Jurisdiction	1868-1911

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|---|-----------|
| (i) Industries & Science | 1872-1877 |
| (j) Relief, Scarcity & Famine | 1872-1881 |
| (k) Agriculture | 1873-1922 |
| (l) Registration | 1873-1922 |
| (m) Commerce | 1923-1949 |
| (n) Land Reform | 1857-1960 |
| (o) Industries | 1923-1936 |
| (4) Judicial & Law Department—1859-1956 | |
| (a) Judicial & Law | 1859-1956 |
| (b) Jail | 1859-1950 |
| (c) Mines | 1910-1911 |
| (d) Election | 1922-1951 |
| (e) Legislative | 1902-1956 |
| (5) Appointment Department—1866-1962 | |
| (a) Appointment | 1866-1962 |
| (b) Election | 1922-1956 |
| (6) Municipal & L. S. G. Department—1873-1949 | |
| (a) Municipal | 1873-1911 |
| (b) Municipal (L.S.G.) | 1886-1922 |
| (c) L. S. G. | 1923-1949 |
| (d) Medical | 1874-1949 |
| (e) Sanitation | 1886-1949 |
| (f) Excise Akbari | 1872-1949 |
| (g) Forest | 1887-1891 |
| (h) Marine | 1859-1891 |
| (i) Railway | 1877-1891 |
| (j) Commerce | 1912-1922 |
| (k) Calcutta Port Trust | 1870-1888 |
| (7) Finance Department—1859-1963 | |
| (a) Finance | 1859-1963 |
| (b) Statistics | 1871-1911 |
| (c) Commerce | 1912-1922 |
| (d) Road Cess | 1873-1911 |
| (e) Treasure Trove | 1912-1922 |
| (f) Separate Revenue | 1901-1922 |
| (g) Stamp | 1873-1937 |

(h) Customs & Salt	1873-1888
(i) Opium	1872-1911
(j) Customs	1872-1911
(k) Stationery	1879-1891
(l) Miscellaneous	1874-1936
(m) Budget	1873-1963
(n) Income Tax	1894-1900
(o) Local Taxation	1863-1893
(p) Licence Tax	1901-1912
(8) Development Department—1923-1949	
(a) Agriculture	1923-1949
(b) Industries	1923-1949
(c) Miscellaneous	1923-1949
(d) Registration	1923-1945
(9) Welfare Department—1949-1952	
(10) Supply & Commerce Department—1942-1950	
(a) Establishment	1942-1950
(b) Cloth	1942-1950
(11) Census Department—1931-1952	
(12) Political (Special Records)—1912-1947	

(A) SECRETARIAT DEPARTMENT RECORDS

(New Secretariat Repository)

(1) Labour Department	1950-1962
(2) Development Department	
(a) Animal Husbandry	1950-1953
(b) Veterinary	1952-1955
(c) Agriculture	1950-1959
(d) Industries	1950-1953
(e) Miscellaneous	1950-1955
(3) Animal Husbandry Department	1954-1960
(4) Health Department	1950-1958
(5) Local Self-Government	1950-1965
(6) Education Department	1950-1960

(B) CENTRALISED DIVISIONAL & DISTRICT RECORDS
(Old Secretariat Records Repository)

(1) Chotanagpur Commissioner's Records	1795-1900
(2) Patna Commissioner's Records	1811-1900
(3) Bhagalpur Commissioner's Records	1832-1900
(4) Bhagalpur District Records	1770-1900
(5) Purnea District Records	1775-1874
(6) Saran District Records	1979-1900
(7) Shahabad District Records	1781-1800
(8) Muzaffarpur District Records	1782-1869
(9) Monghyr District Records	1812-1900
(10) Hazaribagh Dy. Commissioner's Records	1833-1876
(11) Ranchi Dy. Commissioner's Records	1837-1900
(12) Singhbhum District Records	1837-1900
(13) Champaran District Records	1837-1905
(14) Gaya District Records	1842-1905

(C) SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

(1) Gazette	
(a) Calcutta Gazette	1832-1956
(b) Gazette of India	1864-to date
(c) Bihar Gazette	1912-to date
(2) Electoral Rolls (New Secretariat Repository) [Except for 1967, 1965, 1972 & 1973]	1963-1975
(3) Records relating to Mahatma Gandhi's Move- ment in Champaran	1917-1918
(4) Records relating to Freedom Movement in Bihar	1930-1945
(5) Vernacular Records—Firmans, Sanad & Parwanas of the Moghal period.	

LIST OF CLOTH MOUNTED WALL MAPS IN THE
BIHAR STATE ARCHIVES, PATNA

- (1) Skeleton Map of Bihar, showing Divisions, Districts, Sub-divisions and Police Stations (Published in 1939)

(2) Political-cum-Road Map of Bihar and Orissa showing important towns and villages (Published in 1936)

(3) Skeleton Maps of Districts :

(i) Muzaffarpur	(1941)
(ii) Bhagalpur	(1941)
(iii) Manbhum	(1941)
(iv) Hazaribagh	(.....)
(v) Monghyr	(.....)

(4) Detailed District Maps :

(i) Manbhum	(1924)
(ii) Palamau	(1927)
(iii) Darbhanga	(1948)
(iv) Champaran	(1940)
(v) Gaya	(1948)
(vi) Shahabad	(1946)
(vii) Ranchi	(.....)
(viii) Santal Parganas	(1946)
(ix) Purnea	(1945)
(x) Saran	(1939)
(xi) Pafna	(.....)

(5) Detailed Nepal—Northern Bihar Map (1933)

LITERARY SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF MODERN BIHAR

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Even such is Time, that takes in trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with earth and dust ;
Who in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days ;
But from this earth, this grave, this dust
My God shall raise me up, I trust.

—SIR WALTER RALEIGH

Indeed if God has to raise men and moments out of the dead past, it is literature that fulfils His purpose. Through contemporary literature we take a glimpse of the past. We get an enchantingly realistic picture of the bygone days, of the throbs and throes of life in cities and villages, of the hopes and aspirations as well as agonies and anxieties of men and women long gone into oblivion. The literature of Bihar, rich in both variety and quality, offers a good source of information for writing the province's modern history.

Under literary sources we generally include contemporary biographies, autobiographies, reminiscences and diaries. So far, as Bihar is concerned, we find them in a fairly large number in Hindi, Urdu, Bengali and Maithili, besides a good number of memoirs and recollections in English. However, it is to be noted that a contemporary autobiography or reminiscence of the standard of Sivanath Sastri's *Atmcharit* and Ramtanu Lahiri's *O Tatkalin Bangosamaj* or Rajnarayan Bose's *Sekal O Ekal* or Debendranath

Tagore's *Autobiography* could not be located in Bihar—either in terms of contemporaneity or of depth—in the nineteenth century.

I

Among the memoirs and recollections in English, Dr. Sachidanand Sinha's *Some Eminent Behar Contemporaries* (Patna, 1944) holds a prominent place. Himself a great luminary in the province's galaxy of celebrities, Dr. Sinha draws exquisite life-sketches of some contemporary personalities like Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh of Darbhanga, Hasan Imam, Ali Imam, Shiva Shankar Prasad, Dip Narayan Singh of Bhagalpur, Rameshwar Singh and others. The book throws a lot of light on Bihar politics and freedom struggle. Dr. Rajendra Prasad's *Autobiography* (Delhi, 1957), originally published in Hindi, is another remarkable work. In course of a delightful recollection of his childhood in rural setting, adolescence and active professional and political career, India's first President has drawn a vivid picture of Bihar's society and politics in the first half of this century. In the Foreword he notes, "A greater portion of this work was written by me in prison between 1942 and 1945. It brings the story of my life to 1946."¹ He admits that due to his preoccupation as the country's first citizen, he could not make the work up-to-date by including the equally important subsequent events.² This book is particularly valuable for those working on the history of national movement in Bihar, and, in a lesser degree for the students of social history. Rajendra Prasad's another work, *Mahatma Gandhi in Bihar : Some Reminiscences*, published in 1949, is also useful for researchers on the freedom struggle in Bihar.

The eminent poet Dr. Ramdhari Singh Dinkar's *Reflections on Men and Things* (Patna, 1968) puts focus on some contemporary personalities and events of Bihar. In the same category fall two works—Hemchandra Mitra's³ *My Reminiscences* (1946) and Nagendra Nath Gupta's *Reflections and Reminiscences* (1947). The noteworthy point about these two works are that

they seldom appear to be eulogistic even while reflecting upon some front-ranking personalities. Research scholars on Bihar's political and social history will benefit from Sushama Sen's *Memoirs of an Octogenarian* (New Delhi, 1971). A close associate of Rajendra Prasad, Sri Krishna Sinha and Anugrah Narayan Sinha, a political activist, a former Member of Parliament and a social reformer, Sushama Sen presents a fascinating panorama of men and happenings in Bihar from 1920 to 1960. It is particularly important for those working on the female emancipation, development of female education and the Brahmo Samaj movement in the province. Dr. Hetukar Jha⁴ has done a commendable service to the research scholars by editing the *Autobiographical Notes of Mahamahopadhyaya Ganga Nath Jha* (Allahabad, 1976). The great father of an equally illustrious son, Amarnath Jha, Ganga Nath Jha spent his childhood and youth in Darbhanga, later earned eminence as a scholar of Sanskrit and Indian philosophy, and served as the Vice-Chancellor of the Allahabad University. His autobiographical notes provide an account of the contemporary Mithila society and culture. They also record educational development in Bihar.

II

So far as writings in Hindi are concerned, we, in Bihar, do not possess that large number of autobiographies, contemporary biographies and reminiscences in Hindi which we find in Bengal written in Bengali in the 19th and early 20th centuries. One potent reason was the continuance of Urdu as the court language of Bihar till 1880. Though the use of Hindi could be traced to early 19th century when the Christian missionaries adopted it as the medium for the propagation of their faith among the local people.⁵ This, no doubt, gave some encouragement to Hindi, but due to lack of official patronage it could make little headway in Bihar.⁶ It was Bhudeva Mukhopadhyaya,⁷ the Government Inspector of Vernacular Schools, who inspired Babu Ramdeen Singh to set up the Khadga Vilas Press at Bakerganj, Patna, in 1880.⁸ The credit for writing the first biography in Hindi

in Bihar can be attributed to Ramdeen Singh. His work *Bihar Darpan* (Patna, undated) contains biographical sketches of twenty-three personalities of Bihar. The Khadga Vilas Press also made a series of publications which are of immense significance to those working on Bihar's socio-cultural history in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It published the works of Bhartendu Babu Harishchandra serially in its journal *Harishchandra Kala Vidya Vinod*, a literary magazine edited by Chandi Prasad Singh and *Chiksha*, a Hindi weekly devoted to educational matters in the province. Contemporaneously Keshava Bhatta and Madan Lal Bhatta published *Bihar Bandhu*, a Hindi journal from their own Press in Patna City.⁹ Another early work portraying almost the same period is Swami Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi's *Prabashi Ki Atmakatha* (New Delhi, 1947). Bhawani Dayal hailed from Arrah, toured every part of the province and also spent a major portion of his life in South Africa and Mauritius. So, he not only draws a picture of Bihar in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but also of the Biharis working as indentured labour overseas and of the implantation of Bihari culture in Mauritius.

Among the outstanding memoirs contemporary biographies dealing with the political events and personalities from the days of the Morley-Minto Reforms to those of the Quit India Movement and Independence, and also portraying the social scene are Rajendra Prasad's *Atmakatha* (Patna, 1947), Shivaji Rao Ayde's *Maulana Mazrul Haque* (Mazrul Haque Trust, Chapra, undated), Ram Briksha Benipuri's *Jayaprakash* (Patna, 1948), Beni Madhav Mishra's *Bihar Gaurav* (Patna, 1933), Akshaybat Mishra's *Atma-charit* (Laheriasarai, 1939), Rahul Sankrityayan's *Meri Jeevan Yatra* (Calcutta, 1951), Shiv Pujan Sahay's *Rajendra Prasad* (Patna, Sambat 2006) and Chabi Nath Pandey's *Apni Baat* (Patna, 1956). Going through these works is indeed a wonderful intellectual experience as it amounts to viewing the course of the Indian national movement from a close range, the authors had been either direct participants in the movement or the close associates of the participants.

There is another group of memoirs and recollections that reflect upon the rise and development of leftist and peasant move-

ments in Bihar. The remarkable among them are Swami Shahajanand Saraswati's *Mere Jeevan Sangharsh* (Patna, 1952) and Kishan Sabha Ke Sansmaran (Patna, 1947), Rahul Sankrityayan's *Volga se Ganga* and Indradeep Sinha's *Bihar Men Communist Party Ka Vikas*.

Besides these, there is a fairly large number of reminiscences, travelogues and diaries of politicians, litterateurs, educationists and others. They make a good reservoir of knowledge on the socio-cultural and political history (including freedom struggle) of modern Bihar. Noteworthy among them are Rajendra Prasad's *Bapu Ke Kadmon Men* (Patna, 1950) and *Bihar Men Mahatma Gandhi* (Patna, undated), Shri Krishna Mishra's¹⁰ *Beete Din* (Monghyr, 1972), Shashi Nath Chaudhary's *Mithila Darshan* (Patna, 1931), Rahul Sankrityayan's *Ghumakkar Ki Diary*, Raja Radhika Raman Prasad Singh's *Haveli aur Jhopri* (Shahabad, 1952) and *Tab aur Aab* (Shahabad, 1959), Rambriksha Benipuri's *Janjeere aur Diware* (Delhi, undated), Chabinath Pandey's *Aatpate Chitra* (Patna, 1955), Anugrah Narayan Sinha's *Mere Sansmaran*, Shiv Pujan Sahay's *We Din We Log* (Delhi, 1965) and *Vimbwa-Pratinimbwa* (Patna, 1967), Ramdhari Singh Dinkar's *Sansmaran aur Shradhanjaliya* (Patna, 1968), *Dinkar ki Diary* (Patna, undated) and *Dinkar ke Patra* (Dinkar Shodh Sansthan, Calcutta, 1981), Mukutdhari Singh's *Swatantrata Sangram : Bhule Bichhre Chitra* (Patna, 1980) and Shankar Dayal Singh's *Kahi Subah Kahi Shyam* (Patna, 1974). The pleasure of research gets augmented several times when the researcher goes through these fascinating writings, even though often he has to be discriminating enough to search for truth and objectivity from eulogy and adulation.

Very much in this category are the felicitation volumes called the *Abhinandan Granth*. The useful volumes for our purpose are : *Rajendra Abhinandan Granth* (published by the Nagari Pracharini Sabha, Arrah, Sambat 2006), edited by Radhika Raman Prasad Singh and Ramdahin Mishra ; *Jayaprakash Narayan Abhinandan Granth* (Patna, 1978), edited by K. L. Sharma ; *Hariaudh Abhinandan Granth* (Nagari Pracharini Sabha, Arrah, undated), edited by Sakal Narayan Sharma ;

Bihar ki Mahilayen (*Rajendra Abhinandan Granth*, Mahila Charkha Samiti, Patna, 1962), edited by Shiv Pujan Sahay; *Deshgaurav Jagjivan Ram Abhinandan Granth* (Jagjivan Abhinandan Samiti, Calcutta, 1962), edited by G. S. Pathik; and *Sri Krishna Abhinandan Granth* (Sri Abhinandan Samiti, Munghyr, Sambat 2005), edited by Ramdhari Singh Dinkar.

III

In Urdu too we have some literary works which make a fairly good source of information on the history of modern Bihar. Shah Azimabadi, the famous late 19th century Urdu poet, was specially commissioned by the Government of Bihar in 1878 to write on the history and culture of the people of Bihar. The result was the *Tarikh-i-Bihar* in two volumes. It describes, with exquisite literary charm and poetic beauty, firstly, the historical buildings and inscriptions and secondly, the social functions, festivities and religious ceremonies of the province. Another interesting late 19th century work is *Tarikh-i-Sasaram*. It is a general account of the town and neighbourhood of Sasaram, putting particular emphasis upon historical buildings, local offices, social life and contemporary personalities.

Among the memoirs, biographies and reminiscences we have Abdur Rahim's *Tazkira-i-Sadqa* (Allahabad, 1924). It gives biographical accounts of the leaders of the Wahabi movement of Patna, their trial and eventual deportation to the Andaman Islands in the 1980's. It is a magnificent portrayal of the purificatory and protestant Wahabi movement in Bihar with its centre at Patna. Another good contemporary biographical account furnished by the *Mohammedan Education Committee's Collector's Report* on eminent Muslim dignitaries of Bihar from 1915 to 1920. A rare work is Lala Ram Narayan Gupta's *Savaneh Umri Shradheya Prakash Devji : Pracharak Brahmah Dharma* (Lahore, 1915). It is an extremely informative biography of Prakash Dev, a Punjabi gentleman and headmaster of Dayal Singh High School, Lahore, who joined the Brahmo Samaj in 1892, came to Patna

and Arrah as a missionary and stayed in Bihar from 1894 to 1900. There is also a nice travelogue *Safarnama-e-Mazhari*. Among the autobiographies the only noteworthy one is Dr. Kalimuddin Ahmed's *Apni Talash Men* (Patna, 1972). Dr. Ahmed, a former professor of English and Principal of Patna College and a very highly esteemed person in Patna's academic circle, provides us with many information on the men and happenings in Bihar from the early part of this century till the 1960's. Dr. Ahmed has also dealt with the Wahabi movement in Bihar.

There were two periodicals, *Nadin*, published from Gaya, and *Maasir*, from Patna, which contained a lot of reminiscences and articles on men and events in the province. *Nadin* brought out two special numbers on Bihar in 1935 and 1948, which can be profitably used by researchers. *Maasir* first came out in 1940. Its back volumes contain many articles of historical interest including several by Prof. Syed Hasan Askari and Dr. Qeyamuddin Ahmed.

IV

A considerable number of literary works in Bengali also provide very useful information on Bihar's modern period. The Bengali Bhadraklok migration to Bihar began to grow since the last days of the East India Company's rule, and was considerable by the end of the 19th century, mainly because of the opportunities offered by teaching and legal professions, and government jobs in the offices, railways, and post and telegraphs. It is from these Bengali settlers here that we got some shining luminaries of the world of Bengali literature.

Among these early Bengali migrants a fair number was of Brahmos, consisting of missionaries, teachers and officers, who bequeathed to us some memorable autobiographies and biographies. They are: Prakash Chandra Roy's *Aghore-Prakash* (Calcutta, 1907), Nabinchandra Sen's *Amar Jeeban*, five volumes (Calcutta, 1908-13), Rajani Kanta Guha's *Atmacharit* (Calcutta, 1949), S. Roy Choudhary's *Sris Chandra Chakraborty* (Calcutta, 1960)

and Niranjan Niyogi's *Sadhan O Seva: Brajagopal Niyogir Jeevanalekhya* (Calcutta, 1963), besides Sivanath Sastri's *Atinacharit*. Prakash Chandra was the father and Aghore Kamini Devi the mother of Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy. In *Aghore-Prakash* Prakash Chandra has presented the life of Aghore Kamini, a great social reformer and pioneer of female education in Bihar. Nabinchandra Sen, a great figure of Bengali literature, came to Bhabua in 1869 to take up his assignment as subdivisional officer. In *Amar Jeeban*, Vol. II, he has made a graphic description of the towns of Bhabua, Arrah, Sasaram, Buxar and Rohtas in the 1870's, of the social customs and festivals and religious ceremonies prevalent then, and of the contemporary means of transport and communication. The other works mentioned above are outstanding too, and we get from them not only the lives of some dedicated souls to the cause of the Brahmo Samaj movement and the growth of modern education in Patna, but also a picture of the Bihar society from the mid-nineteenth century to the thirties of the present century. Besides these, a few short biographies of eminent Brahmos of Bihar like Niranjan Niyogi, Ajit Bandopadhyaya, Bijoy Karmakar, K. M. Poddar, S. M. Ghoshal and others, published on the occasion of their Shraddha ceremony, can be found in the Bankipore Brahmo Mandir, presently under the control of the author.

A very good amount of historical material could be gathered from purely literary works, like novels, short stories and travelogues. The places and people of Bihar held an irresistible attraction for some top-ranking Bengali litterateurs. Dinabandhu Mitra, of *Neel-Darpan* fame, began his career as a postmaster at Patna in 1855.¹¹ His travelogue *Suradhani Kavya* (Calcutta, 1871) makes a beautiful description in verse of his voyage through the Ganges and stop-over at three towns by the holy river—Patna, Bhagalpur and Monghyr. Scholars on urban history can obtain materials on these towns in the third quarter of the last century. Sarat Chandra Chatterji, though born in Hooghly, Bengal, spent his childhood and youth, and had his education at Bhagalpur; there he began his career as a munshi in the Banali estate, and also lived for some years at Muzaffarpur.

These all are described in *Srikanta*, Vol. I—an absorbing portrayal of Bhagalpur and Muzaffarpur societies in the late 19th century—again useful for the scholars interested in the history of these towns. Bibhuti Bhushan Bandyopadhyaya, of the *Pather Panchali* fame, wrote one book on Bihar—*Aranyak*. The locale is Purnea district's vast forest-land Labdhulia, and the author wove around a classic on the forest, its idyllic surroundings, its enchanting natural beauty and, most of all, on the tribal people, who inhabit it, their simple, innocent and happy life. It will be useful for students of tribal history. Purnea attracted another Bengali litterateur—Satinath Bhaduri.¹² A law graduate of Patna University, Satinath had a lucrative practice as a lawyer at Purnea, joined the Indian National Congress, plunged into the national movement in 1939, led the 1942 movement in Purnea and served prison terms along with Jayaprakash Narayan, Sri Krishna Sinha and Anugrah Narayan Sinha at Hazaribagh jail in 1941-42.¹³ The researchers on freedom movement in Bihar can extract a lot from his political novel *Jagari* (1946)—a brilliant exposure of his experience of events and impression of characters in connection with the foreign struggle. His another work, *Dhorai Charit Manas*, two volumes (1948 and 1951), on the other hand, brought with impeccable vividness the picture of Bihar's rural life—the life of the large folk of peasantry, of the Tatmas and Dhangars. The charm of the Mithila region also attracted several Bengali litterateurs. But the most well-known of them is Bibhuti Bhushan Mukherji, who was brought up in Darbhanga, served as the tutor in the Darbhanga Raj family and headmaster of the Darbhanga Raj High School, and ended up his service career as the editor of the Raj-owned newspaper, *The Indian Nation*, in Patna. His reminiscences recorded in *Swargadapi Gariyasi* and *Kushi Pramganer Chithi*, are useful for scholars working on Mithila and the Raj family.

V

So far as the literary sources in Maithili are concerned, we have very small number of autobiographies, contemporary bio-

graphies and reminiscences. Among the autobiographies the most noteworthy is *Dinabandhu Smriti Granth* (Dinabandhu Smarak Samiti, Darbhanga, 1978). This work depicts the life and times of Mahamahopadhyaya Dinanath Jha, an erudite scholar of Sanskrit and Maithili. This concerns the late 19th and the first three decades of the 20th centuries. There has also been a Maithili translation of the original English autobiography of Ganganath Jha—*Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Sir Ganganath Jha ko Atmakatha* (Maithili Academy, Patna, 1978); the translator is Dr. Sushil Jha. The autobiography of Prof. Harimohan Jha, a former Head of the Philosophy Department, Patna University, is to be published soon. Needless to add, it will be of immense value to research scholars.

The two reminiscences we have are Girindra Mohan Mishra's *Kichhu Dekhal Kichhu Sunal* (Darbhanga, undated) and Lakshmipati Singh's *Sansamaran* (Maithili Academy, Patna, 1982). Girindra Mohan Mishra, esteemed as the Grand Old Man of Mithila, breathed his last in 1981. Very intimately attached to the Darbhanga Raj, he has recorded his experiences about the Raj family, some great contemporaries and the Mithila society in general. Lakshmipati Singh, a scion of the Darbhanga Raj family, served as the librarian in *the Indian Nation* publication and devoted almost fifty years of his life to the Maithili movement, which makes his recollections valuable.

The society of Mithila, with orthodox Brahminical preponderance in both political and social spheres, was basically conservative in character right till the middle of this century. However, a voice of dissent and protest could be heard even in this conservative milieu. This voice, though dim in the beginning, gained strength as time passed on. Some notable works of the Maithili literature bring out this element of dissent and the clash between traditionalism and the new ideas very effectively. They draw a picture of the Mithila society between 1920 and 1950, and demonstrate the social change that was taking place as a result of the new awakening. Some shortcomings of this society were Kulinism, polygamy among Panji-holders, child-

marriages, low social status of widows and non-entrance of the lower caste men into temples. Kumar Ganga Nand Singh's¹⁴ *Jeevan Sangarsha* and Bihari, Hari Mohan Jha's *Kanyadan* and *Gram Sevika*, Yogananda Jha's *Bhal Manush* and Baidyanath Mishra Yatri's *Chitra Vilap* and *Nav Turiya* reflect this struggle of the new forces against time-honoured customs and conventions of the society.

To sum up, the volume and richness of the literary source for writing modern Bihar's history are considerable enough, more so, because material is available in five languages—English, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali and Maithili. The sources, if properly explored, will throw new light on the political, social and cultural history of Bihar in modern period.*

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- ¹ Rajendra Prasad, *Autobiography*, Delhi, 1957, p. 11.
- ² *Ibid.*
- ³ A reputed lawyer of Chapra from 1920-40.
- ⁴ Reader in Sociology, Patna University.
- ⁵ N. Kumar, ed, *Patna District Gazetteer*, Govt. of Bihar, p. 88.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ A famous Bengali litterateur too.
- ⁸ *Disrtict Gazetteer*, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰ A noted social worker and politician of Monghyr; father of Rajendra Kumari Vajpayee, the Secretary of the Congress (I).
- ¹¹ Gopal Haldar, ed. *Dinabandhu Rachana-Sangraha*, Calcutta, 1973, p. 11.

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- ¹¹ Regarded as the literary 'Guru' of Phanishwar Nath Renu and political 'Guru' of Bhoja Paswan Shastri
- ¹² Sukal Ganguly (ed.), *Satmatha Smarane* Patna, 1972, pp. 7-9
- ¹⁴ A former Education Minister of Bihar and first Vice-Chancellor of the Kameshwar Singh Sanskrit University, Darbhanga

2 • Orissa

Ancient Period

COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF THE SOURCE-MATERIAL FOR THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT ORISSA

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THE AVAILABLE literary and archaeological evidence indicates that by about 600 B.C. some parts of Orissa had become well advanced in material culture. Till about the end of the early medieval period, there was a continuous growth of civilisation in this region.

The Rock Edict XIII and the special Kalinga Edicts I and II depict the history of Kalinga in the 3rd century B.C. in a vivid manner. Both the special Kalinga Edicts exclusively devote to the accounts of Kalinga and they present not only data for history but are themselves contemporary narratives of history of the region. The vastness of Pali literature woven round Asoka speaks not a single word about the Kalinga War of the Emperor which is the most significant event in the history of the time. If R.E. XIII would not have come to light, the history of Kalinga, as well as, that of India in the 3rd Century B.C. would have remained to a great part obscure and unintelligible. Kharavela lived two hundred years before Christ and was the first historical king from the eastern coast to lead extensive campaigns in north and south India. He would have remained unknown but for the discovery of the Hathigumpha inscription which notices his exploits. It is a rare document which does not indulge in panegyricism but candidly narrates the events in a chronological sequence and with historical objectivity.

In this connection, mention may be made of the *Madala*

Panji the chronicle of the Jagannath Temple at Puri. It was compiled at the end of the sixteenth century at the time of Ramachandradeva, the founder of the Khurda dynasty. It claims to explore Orissa's past from the beginning of the Kali Age in unbroken continuity down to the time of the consolidation of the British rule. It is puerile to think that the *Panji* is being written from generation to generation since remote past in perpetual manner and that it contains unblemished accounts of history through ages. W. W. Hunter, who published his great work "Orissa or the vicissitudes of the Indian province under Native and British Rule" in two volumes in 1872 as the second and the third volumes of the "Annals of Rural Bengal" depended mainly on *Madala Panji*. The famous historians like Rajendra Lal Mitra and Pyari Mohan Acharya who were contemporaries of W. W. Hunter made a substantial contribution to the history of Orissa but they accepted the changelessness of Hunter's authority and harnessed the *Panji* as veritable work of historical truth.

In the twentieth century, no doubt valuable works had been done to unravel the mystery of ancient Orissa. A scientific line of study of History of Orissa based on epigraphical source-materials and thus deviating from the enticing assumption of Hunter started when Rajendra Lal Mitra wrote his volumes of the *Antiquities of Orissa* (1875-1880). This is a great endeavour of an erudite scholar. The other contemporary scholar who enriched the history of Orissa by his epigraphical knowledge was Manomohan Ganguli, whose contribution to the history of Orissa knows no parallel. R. D. Banerjee's *History of Orissa* in two volumes constitute a landmark in the field. The scholars like B. C. Mazumdar, Pandit Binayak Mishra, Rama Prasad Chanda, G. Ramdas, S. N. Rajguru, R. Subbaroy, K. C. Panigrahi and others threw illuminating light with the epigraphical studies on various aspects of the history of ancient Orissa.

All these works, notable themselves, do not, however portray complete picture of the social, religious, economic and cultural conditions of the people of early Kalinga. In view of the discovery in recent years of new records which may, if properly

studied, help us to illuminate some of the dark chapters of the early history of Kalinga, a modest attempt has been made in this paper to assess the source-materials of ancient Orissa from the earliest time to the end of the Bhaumakara rule.

The sources for the history of ancient Orissa comprise :

- (a) Literary sources, (b) Foreign accounts, (c) Inscriptions, (d) Coins, (e) Monuments of antiquity.

The *Rigveda* is silent about Orissa and it is only in the later Vedic literature that Orissa first finds a mention. The *Ramayana* contains only passing references, but the *Mahabharata* gives details of different regions and peoples of Orissa, talking at one time with contempt and at another showering praise upon them. Both Buddhist and Jaina literature are full of references to various parts of Orissa.

Among the Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit treatises, mention may be made of *the Mahabharata*, *the Ramayana*, *the Arthasastra* of Kautilya, *the Jatakas*, *the Mahavastu*, *the Mahavagga*, *the Ganda-Vyuha*, *the Natya-Sastra* of Bharata, *the Lalitavistara*, *the Raghu-vamsa* of Kalidasa, *the Brihat-samita* of Varahamihira, *the Harshacharita* of Banabhatta, *the Uttaradhyayana Sutra*, *the Dipa-vamsa*, *the Mahavamsa*, *the Dathavamsa*, *the Puranas*, *the Manjusri-mulakalpa*, and *the Mahabodhivamsa*. These texts give authentic material about the political, social and economic condition of ancient Orissa. Of the Tamil literature, *the Silappadigaram* and *the Manimekalai* are the most important.

In regard to Greek and Latin sources, we may refer to *Bibliothekes Historikes* of Diodorus, *Geography of India* written by Ptolemy (about 130 A.D.), Pliny's *Natural History* and the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*. These sources give a valuable account of trade and maritime activities in ancient Orissa. Among the Chinese sources, the *Hsi-yu-chi* of Hiuen Tsang, the life of Hiuen Tsang by Hui-li and the work of Chinese encyclopaedist Ma-Twain are noteworthy. They throw welcome light on Harsha's rule in Orissa. The Muhammedan source, *Hudud-al-Alam*, a work of 982-83 A.D. by an anonymous writer is noteworthy. The said work helps us in setting the chronology of the Bhaumakaras, besides giving us an idea about the condition of their kingdom. Lama Taranath, who wrote his "History of Buddhism in India"

in 1608 A.D. mentions certain events of Orissa which can be connected with the history of the Bhaumakaras.

Inscriptions constitute the bulk of the sources of ancient Orissa. The inscriptions being contemporary records of reliable character, have helped us most. They have furnished us with the names of kings and their achievements, sometimes together with their dates and other necessary particulars and have recorded many important events of history. Inscriptions recording land grants made mainly by chiefs and princes, are very important for the study of the land system and administration in ancient India. There are mostly engraved on copperplates. They record the grants of lands, revenues and villages made to monks, priests, temples, monasteries and officials.

The thirteenth Rock Edict of Asoka gives a vivid account of the conquest of Kalinga after a terrible war in course of which 150,000 persons were captured, 100,000 were slain and many times that number perished. It is described in the inscription that the feeling of remorse and misery which they evoked in him led Asoka to embrace the Buddhist religion, one of whose cardinal doctrines was non-injury to living creatures. It became a turning point in human history.

Asoka's edicts are the main source of tracing the history of Orissa during the Maurya period. The set of his well-known Rock Edicts engraved in Orissa itself are found in two places—the northern set on the Dhauli hill, near Bhubaneswar in the Puri district, while the southern set is engraved on the face of a picturesque rock in a large old fort called Jaugada on the Risikulya river, about 18 miles in the district of Ganjam. But all the fourteen edicts are not found published in Kalinga as at other places. The Rock Edicts XI, XII and XIII have been omitted in Kalinga and in their places were added two Edicts special to this country. Rock Edict XIII refers to the conquest of Kalinga and the terrible massacre in that war. And such an edict may not well have been considered suitable for the conquered territory itself.

Asoka's separate Kalinga edicts throw flood of light on the method and also the policy of Asoka's administration in Kalinga.

These edicts were written in Pali or monumental Prakrit, the language which enjoyed the status of being the *lingua franca* of India in Asoka's time.

Later on, Kharavela's historic inscription came to be written, more or less, in the same language. This inscription is engraved in the Hathigumpha or the elephant cave on the Udayagiri hill near Bhubaneswar in Orissa. It is one of the oldest engraved documents that have come down to us. It has, actually, preserved events in a chronological order of an otherwise unknown monarch of ancient India, whose history is, in another sense, the history of India in the 1st century B.C. It has an order and a sequence not met so far in any other inscription of comparable date and that makes it much more valuable as a historical document. It gives an idea that Kalinga at the time of Kharavela expanded into an empire stretching to the north and to the south. But due to the damages at places, the reading as well as interpretations of various passages of the inscription differ widely. The scholars have utilised the most accepted readings while constructing the history of Kharavela.

Apart from the well-known epigraphs like the Asokan Rock Edicts and the Hathigumpha Inscription, a few records, viz. the Velpuru Inscription of Manasada, the Guntupally Inscription of Sada, etc. enlighten us about the political history of Kalinga up to about 2nd century A.D. Similarly the Bhadrak stone inscription of Maharaja Gono and the Kodavali inscription of Chandasati help us to trace the history of Kalinga during the 3rd century A.D. The Murunda supremacy in Kalinga is suggested by the Bhadrak Stone Inscription.

The Allahabad Pillar Inscription, which gives a detailed account of Samudragupta's campaigns mentions the names of some kings of South Kosala and Kalinga in the list of the vanquished rulers while describing the campaigns of the Emperor in Dakshinapatha. These kings were Mahendra of Kosala, Vyaghra-
raja of Mahakantara, Mantaraja of Kaurala, Mahendragiri of Pistapura, Swamidutta of Kottura, Damana of Erandopalla and Kubera of Devarashtra. Most of these tracts have been located by scholars within the limits of South Kosala and Kalinga. But

there is no evidence that these territories were brought under the direct control of the Gupta Emperors.

The next important record for the history of the Guptas in Kalinga, the Samandala Inscription of Dharmaraja of the time of Prithvivigraha, is dated only in the Gupta year 205, i.e. 559-560 A.D. This inscription and the Ganjam plate of the Sailodbhava show, as has been suggested by D. C. Sarkar, that Kalinga owed allegiance to the Guptas atleast up to about the end of the third quarter of the 6th century A.D.

The Pedda-Dugam copperplates of Satrudaman and the records of Matharas and the Vasishthas constitute another very important source for the study of the history of Kalinga during the 4th-5th centuries A.D. A study of the inscriptions like the Soro plate of Sambhayasas and the Patiakella plate of Sivaraja, the Samandala copperplates and the Kanas plates present us with a more or less connected story of the rule of the Manas and the Guptas in Kalinga.

Towards the later half of the 4th century A.D., a powerful dynasty rose in Orissa to unite a greater portion of the land from the river Mahanadi to the river Godavari. It was the dynasty of the Matharas. A large number of copperplate grants of the Mathara kings have survived till now to speak about their various achievements. Of these epigraphs, mention may be made of the Andhava Ram plates and the Madras Museum plates of Anantasaktivarman, the Ragolu plates of Saktivarman and the Ningondi grant of Prabhanjana Varman. The other epigraphs relevant to the study of the history of the Matharas are Pedda Dugam plates of Satrudamana, the Korashonda plates of Visakhavarman, the Baranga plates, the Dhavalapeta plates, the Tekkali plates, the Vrihat Proshtha grant of Umavarman, the Bobbili plates, the Komarti plates of Chandravarman, the seripuram plates, the Srungavaraparkota plates of Anantavarman, the Baranga plates and the Chicacole plates of Nanda Prabhanjana Varman. The aforesaid inscriptions give us insight into the political and cultural history of the Matharas.

A study of all these records has led a scholar like Dr. D. C. Sirkar to believe in the existence of three separate

dynasties, namely, the Pitribhaktas, the Matharas and the Vasishthas which ruled Kalinga almost contemporaneously with one another. Some think that there were only two dynasties, viz. the Mathara and the Vasishtha, which ruled in Kalinga. Some others hold that the Matharas were the one and the only ruling family during the period from the middle of the 4th century A.D. to the end of the 5th century A.D.

The Vasisthas in Kalinga issued some charters from Devapura and Pistapura, identified with Yellamanuilli in the Visakhapatnam district and Pithapuram in the East Godavari district respectively. The Vasistha supremacy in Kalinga was short lived, for they were soon ousted by the Eastern Gangas, who began their rule in Kalinga in 496 or 498 A.D.

In the southern coastal regions of Kalinga, during the 5th and 6th centuries A.D., a small dynasty named the Sailodbhavas ruled over a kingdom which they called Kangoda or Kanyodha. The epigraphs like Ganjam plates and Khurda plates of Madhavaraja, Buguda plates of Madhavarman, Puri plates of Madhava Varman Sri Sainyabhita, Orissa Museum plates of Madhava Varman, Banpur plates of Madhyamaraja, Parikud plates of Madhyavarajadeva, Nivinna plates of Dharmaraja, Ranapur plates of Dharmaraja, Banpur plates of Dharmaraja, Puri plates of Dharmaraja etc. help us to obtain a connected history of the Shailodbhava kings of South Orissa. These inscriptions supply the most valuable data for reconstructing the economic history of south Orissa. The inscriptions enumerated above were all land grants and recorded only those particulars which were necessary for the gift of land. But concession should be made for the panegyric elements mixed up with the few historical facts available from these documents.

It appears from the Jayarampur copperplate inscription of one Gopachandra that Maharajadhiraja Gopachandra was in occupation of the Balasore area during the last quarter of the 6th century A.D. We get some more information about Gopachandra from the Mallasrul copperplate of Vijayasena and the Faridpur copperplate.

Probably shortly after Gopachandra, the Balasore area passed into the hands of the Manas which is indicated by the Soro plate

of Sambhuyasas dated in A.D. 579-580. Sambhuyasas was ruling over north Tosali in A.D. 579-580 and over South Tosali in A.D. 602-603 probably on behalf of the Manas. This epigraph and Patiakella plate of Sivaraja are two important sources of the history of Mana rule in Orissa.

After the Matharas and Sailodbhavas, the next significant chapter of the political and cultural history of Orissa began during the rule of Bhaumakara. The epigraphic records of the Bhaumakaras are in fact an invaluable mine of information. The Bhaumakara rulers have left us a good number of inscriptions, most of which are in a fairly good state of preservation. The most important of them are Neulpur plate of Subhakaradeva, Chaurasi plate of Sivakaradeva, Ganesh Gumphra inscription of Santikaradeva's time, Dhauli Cave Inscription of Santikaradeva's time, Terundia plate of Subhakaradeva, Hindol plate of Subhakaradeva, Dharakote plate of Subhakaradeva, Dhenkanal plate of Tribhavanadevi, Talcher plate of Subhakaradeva, Talcher plate of Sivakaradeva, Two plates of Tribhuvanamahadevi from Boud, Ganjam plate of Dandimahadevi, Santigrama copperplate grant of Dandimahadevi, Kumurang plate of Dandimahadevi, Ambagaon copperplate of Dandimahadevi, Arnal copperplate grant of Dandimahadevi, a grant of Vakulamahadevi, Angul plate of Dharmamahadevi, Talatabai plate of Dharamamahadevi, Khadipada Image inscription of the time of Subhakaradeva, Hamsesvara Temple inscription of the time of Subhakaradeva, Camunda Image inscription of Vatsadevi and the Angul copperplate grant.

The language used in the inscriptions of the Bhaumakaras is Sanskrit. The texts of the inscriptions are composed both in prose and verse. Orthographically, the texts bear some influence of the Oriya language, which indicates the beginning of the modern Oriya language.

Among other contemporary inscriptions which are directly concerned with the Bhaumakara period, mention may be made of the Sanjan plates of Amoghavarsha I, which credit the Rashtrakuta king Govinda III with the conquest of Kosala, Kalinga, Vanga, Dahala and Odruka. The Badal Pillar Inscription of Narayanapala's time informs us that Devapala

exterminated the race of the Utkalas. The Rastrakutas and the Palas of Gauda being the contemporaries of Bhaumakaras, these references form a definite source of our information. Besides, the Pasupatinatha temple inscription of Rajyamati, the queen of Jayadeva II (714-752 A.D) of Nepal is of great value in tracing the origin of the Bhaumakaras.

Coins, as the materials of the study of ancient Orissa, do not constitute a major source. Of the coins, mention may be made of the Puri-Kushana coins and the Gandibedha coins which may be said to throw useful light on some of the aspects of the history of Kalinga during the early centuries of the Christian era. The discovery of later Andhra-Satavahana coins at Sisupalagada has led Dr. K. C. Panigrahi to suggest that there was a period of Andhra-Satavahana supremacy in Kalinga. This is indicated by the large hoards of the so-called Kushana coins discovered from different parts of Orissa and a gold coin found from Sisupalagada excavation in 1949.

The materials derived from the coins are scanty and fragmentary. Nevertheless, they throw valuable light on the political and economic history of ancient Orissa.

Monumental remains form the next important source of our information. Besides existing monuments there is a class of materials such as detached sculptures or architectural fragments, now found in different parts of Orissa, belonging to the buildings that were no longer in existence. These materials, when closely studied are to provide some valuable data for the reconstruction of the history of art and architecture of the place.

The earliest specimen of sculptural art in Kalinga is the colossal figure of the forepart of an elephant carved at the top of the boulder containing Asoka's rock edicts at Dhauli. This elephant figure is certainly contemporary to the inscription. The elephant figure at Dhauli lacks, however, characteristics usually found in the Asokan sculptures. The lustrous polish, characteristically described as Mauryan, is completely absent. The Dhauli figure appears to be the work of the local artists who were upholders of the indigenous tradition.

The epoch of Kharavela is characterised by cave architecture in Kalinga. The Khandagiri-Udayagiri hills, situated at a

distance of about five miles to the north-west of the town of Bhubaneswar, are honey-combed with caves. There are in all some 35 caves—large and small, but only half of them are of any significance. Some sixteen of them are in Udayagiri, while there is only one of any importance on the Khandagiri. The architects of Orissa had attained considerable excellence at the time when these rock-dwellings were excavated. They evince much technical knowledge and sufficient mastery to give shape to life and feelings. There is, however, a want of finish and fineness in chiseling, but there is no lack of vigorous action delineated in every limb.

The specimens that have been discovered, noticed and assigned to the post-Kharavela period are the images of Naga and Yaksha and certain other brahmanical gods and goddesses bearing the Gupta and post-Gupta characteristics.

While tracing the development of art and architecture, we are placed in a better position when we come to the seventh century A.D., to which the earliest extant temples have been assigned. The temples of Lakshmanesvara, Bharatesvara and Satrugnesvara constitute the earliest group among those extant in Bhubaneswar area. They immediately preceded the temples of the Parasuramesvara group to which a rectangular pillared porch is attached.

The Bhaumakara period in Orissa begins from the second quarter of the 8th century A.D. The Bhaumakara monuments are, therefore immediate successors of the above mentioned earliest extant temples. Dr. K. C. Panigrahi has assigned some temples of Bhubaneswar like Vaital, Sisiresvara Markandesvara, Talesvara, Mohini, Uttaresvara and Vahirangesvara to Bhaumakara cultural epoch.

Apart from some temples of Bhubaneswar, the structural and sculptural relics of Orissa assignable to the period of Bhaumakara supremacy, are to be found in many other places of Orissa. The Udayagiri, Lalitagiri and Ratnagiri hills of the Cuttack district contain some rich Buddhist relics.

No work furnishing complete and comprehensive picture of the social or economic history of ancient Orissa has been attempted as yet. Even the maritime activities of Orissa have not

drawn the attention of the scholars. Of course there is paucity of materials so far as these aspects are concerned. The cultural contributions of ancient Orissa are admirable. But a comprehensive and objective study of the cultural history of ancient Orissa is yet to be made. Though some good work has been done on Buddhism, no work has been so far published on Jainism and Saktism.

Even today, much of the source-material is lying scattered and untapped. Of course, Orissa State Museum is making all possible efforts to collect and make them available to the scholars. Orissa is quite rich in historical sites which need excavation. The excavation at Lalitagiri and Ratnagiri though not complete, has unearthed the rich historical treasures and materials that can be handled by a researcher for constructing the history of the period. Jaugarh in south Orissa comparatively belongs to an earlier period. Yet for its excavation, it has not been able to draw attention of the Archaeological Survey of India. Similarly other sites in different parts of Orissa should be surveyed for the purpose of excavation and collection of antiquities. The State Archaeological Section has done a good work in excavating the remains of the Prachi Valley. Similar survey and excavation works may be taken up on the Rushikulya Valley which is rich historically. Such excavation in different parts of Orissa will bring more materials to hands, and help in throwing light on the history of those parts of Orissa, which have remained obscure at present.

Lastly, it is to be stated that there is no aspect of the history of ancient Orissa which has been adequately dealt with. Even the comprehensive study of the dynasties like Matharas, Nalas and Kadambas is yet to be undertaken. Secondly, the social, economic and cultural aspects of the history of ancient Orissa has not yet been studied in an objective and detailed way. Moreover, a comprehensive history of ancient Orissa written from a purely historical point of view is yet to see the light of the day. Let us hope that some competent scholars will come forward to study those aspects of the history of ancient Orissa hitherto left unexplored in a rational manner before it is too late.

LITERARY SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT ORISSA

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ANCIENT Indian literatures, in general, contain a large number of references to Orissa and provide a lot of materials which enable us to construct the history of this country. The literary sources are no doubt more sacred than secular and the informations given by them are to be used with caution. For the convenience of our discussion, these sources may be divided into four sections, namely, (a) Brahmanical literature, (b) Buddhist literature, (c) Jaina literature, and (d) Foreign accounts.

(a) *Brahmanical Literature*

The Vedic texts contain no direct reference to Kalinga, Utkala or Odra. A political account of ancient Orissa can be gathered from the *Puranas* and the *Mahabharata* which reveal that Orissa in the epic age was outside the pale of Aryan civilisation. It was not Aryanised even as late as the time of the writing of the *Dharmasutras*. The *Mahabharata* branded the Kalinga people as *Durdharma* and states that they should be avoided. The lowest Brahmanas are said to reside in Kalinga from very remote times. They are without the Vedas, without knowledge, without sacrifice and without power to assist others at their sacrifice. The gods do not accept any gift from them. Even in the *Baudhayana Dharmasutra*, Kalinga is regarded as an impure country although it was not unfrequented by the Aryans.

The same *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas* provide also a contrary view extolling the people of Kalinga. They describe that Kalinga has a number of sacred places of pilgrimage and even state that a tour of pilgrimage is not thought to be

complete without a bath in the river Vaitarani there. The description of Yudhisthira's pilgrimage to Kalinga attracts our attention in this respect. The *Puranas* condemn Orissa as a *Mlechha* country, but at the same time credit Kalinga, Odra and Utkala with Aryan origin. Kalinga and Odra, for example, are described as sons of king Bahi from queen Sudeshina through rishi Dirghatamas.⁴ The kings of these countries were treated as equal with the Aryan rulers of north India and they even established matrimonial relations with them. The *Adi Parva* records that a Kalinga princess Krauchha married the *Paurava* king Akrodhana.⁵ The *Santi Parva* describes how Duryodhana kidnapped the Kalinga princess Chitrangada from the *Svayamvara* ceremony and married her.⁶ In the *Bhishata War*, the king of Kalinga is said to have joined the side of Kaurava whereas the kings of Odra and Kosala took the side of the Pandavas and they fought heroically upholding the prestige of their countries.⁷ The kings of Kalinga and Odra attended the *Rasuya* sacrifice performed by Yudhisthira.⁸

Orissa in ancient times was mostly inhabited by tribal people who had got more fascination for heterodox sects like Jainism and Buddhism than for Brahmanical religion in which they were degraded to the low caste of the *Sudras*. It is probably because of this that Jainism and Buddhism gained great popularity in Orissa from the time of their inception. Naturally, therefore, Jain and Buddhist literature describe the people of Orissa and their culture with greater sympathy.

The *Puranas*, while speaking of various ruling dynasties of India during the period following the Mahabharata War, state that thirty-two kings ruled over Kalinga during the period.⁹ But they do not describe the activities of these kings and not even mention their names. The Buddhist sources throw more light on these kings. The *Ramayana* contains a single reference to Kalinga nagara, situated to the west of the river Gomati¹⁰ and describes Utkala only once associating it with Mekala and Dasarna countries.¹¹

It is necessary to draw special attention of our scholars to the *Ramayana* as a source-material for our ancient history. Some eminent scholars like Prof. H. D. Sankharia of

the Deccan University, Poona and Prof. N. K. Sahu of Sambalpur University, Orissa, assert that Suvarnapura (ruins of Asurgarh near Sonepur) at the confluence of the Mahanadi and the Tel in western Orissa, represents the Lanka of the *Ramayana*.¹² Attempts are made to identify Dandakaranya with Bastar-Koraput region,¹³ Kiskindhya with Bilaspur region,¹⁴ Gandharmardana with Gandhagiri¹⁵ on the border of Sambalpur and Balangir districts, and so on. About these identifications there is no doubt a lot of controversy which is not under the purview of our discussion.

It is described in the *Ramayana*¹⁶ that Rama, before his death, divided his kingdom between his two sons Lava and Kusa. The latter received the southern territories near the Vindhya, comprising the eastern Madhya Pradesh and the western Orissa of the present day. He established the rule of his dynasty in that region which came to be known as Kosala-lesa or south Kosala as distinguished from north Kosala or Sravasti kingdom of Lava. The *Puranas* provide an almost complete genealogy of the dynasty of Kusa in south Kosala. North Kosala, after Lava, seems to have declined. Some scholars¹⁷ in their attempt to write the history of Kosala (north Kosala) confuse the genealogy of the *Puranas* and describe the descendants of Kusa as those of Lava. The evidences in the *Puranas* in this respect are very clear and with the help of them an attempt can be made to construct the traditional history of south Kosala in which the whole of western Orissa was included.¹⁸

The genealogical accounts in the *Puranas* continued even after the traditional period which ended with the rise of the Nandas. The accounts provided by the Brahmanical literature about the Nandas and the Mauryas are greatly supplemented and supported not only by the Buddhist and Jaina literature but also by the foreign accounts of Pliny, Diodorus, Curtius, Plutarch and others. The *Puranas* describe Mahapadmananda as *Sarva-kshatrantaka*, i.e., destroyer of all Kshatriyas.¹⁹ The Puranic account of his conquest of Kalinga is supported by the Hathigumpha inscription.²⁰ The most important Kshatriya family that was overpowered by the great Nanda king was the Aikshavaku dynasty. This Aikshavaku king is generally identified as a ruler

of north Kosala. We know that the kingdoms of Kosala (south Kosala) and Sravasti (north Kosala) flourished in the traditional period and continued after that. The Aikshvaku rule in north Kosala is known to have been overpowered by Ajatasatru during the time of Vidudhava or his successor long before Mahapadmananda. But the Aikshakus ruled over south Kosala as evidenced by the *Puranas* till the middle of the 4th century B.C. when they were overpowered by Mahapadmananda.

The genealogical accounts of the *Puranas* ended with the period of the Guptas. It reveals that nine powerful kings belonging to the Megha dynasty ruled over Kosala²¹ (apparently south Kosala). These rulers probably belonged to the Mahameghavahana dynasty of Kharavela. The rule of such an important dynasty unfortunately remains obscure.

Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa: A Sanskrit manuscript named *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* written in Oriya script is now preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. It contains an interesting episode about Aira, a Buddhist king of Utkala. He defeated Nandaraaja of Magadha who was a follower of Vedic religion. After that he became a friend of Asoka. Being directed by a divine voice, Aira transferred his capital from Kalinganagara to Ekaprastha where he built his residence at Khandagiri. Jayaswal,²² Sten Konow²³ and Barua²⁴ accepted the episode as historical and identified Aira with Kharavela. Viewed in the light of Hathigumpha inscription, the episode appears absurd and spurious. Dr N. K. Sahu²⁵ observes that the pandit of this manuscript probably got these materials from *History of Orissa* (in Oriya) by Sri Pyarimohan Acharya and even added something to his fancy.

*Yuga Purāṇa*²⁶: Jayaswal draws our attention to another manuscript called *Yuga Purāṇa* which is a section of *Gargi Samhita*. It contains an episode of Saka invasion of Kalinga which was at that time under a Satavahana king. The Satavahana suzerainty over Orissa is attested to by the Nasik cave inscription of the time of Vasisthiputra Pulumavi.²⁷ But the history of the Saka invasion of Kalinga referred to in the manuscript is to be verified.

Ekamra Purāṇa: On the basis of some manuscripts like *Ekamra Purāṇa*, *Ekamra Chandrika* etc.²⁸ it is said that in the

7th century king Sasanka built the temple of Lord Tribhuvaneshwara Siva at Ekamra-Kshetra (Bhubaneswar). The date of these manuscripts cannot be earlier than 17th century A.D. An event of 7th century A.D. cannot be accepted as sober history on the basis of 17th century manuscripts unless it is supported by some other authentic evidences. Many such manuscripts are discovered from time to time revealing sensational stories about history. We should, however, be cautious and critical about them.

Other Indigenous Literature : Besides the epics and the *Puranas*, there are many other works of quasi-religious character which may be included in the section of Brahmanical literature and which throw a good deal of light on the history of Orissa. The earliest of them is the *Astadhyayi* of Panini generally ascribed to 5th century B.C. Panini groups Kalinga with Anga, Vanga, Pundra etc.²⁹ He refers to the flourishing trade of the Taitila Janapada which was very likely a part of Kalinga. V. S. Agrawala³⁰ identifies Taitila territory with Titilagarh region of Orissa. The *Astadhyayi* states that Taitilika was famous for the trade of Kadru which means some tawny coloured materials, probably cotton fabric of that colour.³¹

The *Arthasastra* of Kautilya reveals that Kalinga produced the best type of elephants,³² best type of touchstones of the colour of green beans³³ and the best type of cotton fabric (Karpasika).³⁴ The Tamil word Kalingam for cotton cloth bears testimony to the account of *Arthasastra*^{34a}.

The *Baudhayana Dharmasutra* describes Kalinga as an impure country and states that one who visited it had to perform Sarva-prishti sacrifice to purify himself.³⁵ The law-books of Manu also describe the Odras as degraded Kshatriyas.³⁶

The *Natyasastra* of Bharata,³⁷ ascribed to 2nd-3rd centuries A.D., refers to Kosala, Tosala and Kalinga while describing the southern countries. Kosala is mentioned in the *Kama Sutra* of Vatsayana³⁸ which is ascribed to the end of 3rd century A.D.

In the *Raghuvamsa* of Kalidasa,³⁹ it is described that king Raghu, in course of his military campaigns, entered Utkala after crossing the river Kapisa (Kasai of Midnapur) and then he proceeded towards Kalinga. This shows that Utkala was located north of Kalinga in the 5th century A.D.

The *Brihat Samhita* of Varahamihira⁴⁰ (6th century A.D.) mentions Kalinga, Odra, Kosala etc. in connection with the effect of eclipses under particular conjunction. Dr. A. M. Sastri⁴¹ in his work, *India as seen in the Brihat Samhita of Varahamihira* (1969), has given a good account of this.

Ratnavali of Sri Harsa (7th century A.D.) narrates how a princess of Ceylon was ship-wrecked on the Orissan coast. The *Harsa-Charita* of Banabhatta refers to a king of Kalinga named Bhadrasena who had explicit faith in his wife. His brother Virasena hid the queen in an underground room and thus became the cause of the king's death.⁴²

Tamil Literature : The post-Sangam Tamil works *Silappadikaram* and *Manimekalai*, ascribed to the later part of second century A.D., throw some interesting light on the history of Kalinga. The *Manimekalai* narrates a fratricidal war between two cousin princes, Vasu and Kumara who were ruling from Simhapura and Kapila respectively and states that as a result of the war the prosperous kingdom became desolate.⁴³ These two warring princes are identified with the last Chedi rulers of Kalinga in the later part of the first century A.D.⁴⁴

(b) *Buddhist Literature* :

The Mahagovinda Suttanta⁴⁵ of *Digha Nikaya* describes Kalingarattha (Kalinga-rastra) as one (the first in the list) of the seven political divisions of the time. Its capital was Dantapura. Its king, Sattabhu was contemporary of Brahmadatta of Assaka, Vessabhu of Avanti, Bharata of Sovira, Renu of Videha, Dataratha of Anga and Dataratha of Kasi.

The Upalisutta of *Majjhima Nikaya*⁴⁶ describes an episode of king Nalikirā of Kalinga who died an inglorious death as a consequence of his ill-treatment towards some innocent ascetics. It appears that the kingdom of Kalinga which flourished under king Sattabhu suddenly collapsed at the time of Nalikirā.

The *Kumbhakara Jataka*⁴⁷ reveals that Karakandu flourished in Kalinga as a contemporary of Durmukha of Panchala, Nagnajit of Gandhara and Nimi of Videha. Further light on these kings is thrown by the early Brahmanical and Jaina literature.⁴⁸

The *Sarabhangā Jataka*⁴⁹ gives an account of a powerful king

named Dandaki who was served by three subordinate kings viz., Kalinga, Atthaka and Bhimaratha. The *Kalingabodhi Jataka*⁵⁰ presents an account of three generations of kings of Kalinga, namely, Kalinga I, Mahakalinga and Kalinga II. Kalinga I may be identified with king Kalinga of *Sarabhangā Jataka* where he is described as Antarathadhipati (vassal king) of Dandaka. After the fall of Dandaki empire, Kalinga asserted its independence. Its power and prosperity greatly increased during the rule of Mahakalinga. This king died issueless and was succeeded by his brother Chullakalinga who assumed the name of Kalinga II. The *Chullakalinga Jataka*⁵¹ describes a war-like king named Kalinga who may be identified with Kalinga II of the *Sarabhangā Jataka*. The *Chullakalinga Jataka* refers to a great war between Kalinga II of Kalinga and Aruna of Assaka. The Kalinga army fought bravely but were ultimately defeated because of the dexterity of Nandisena, the crafty minister of Aruna. After that, Kalinga seems to have declined. It does not find place in the list of sixteen Mahajanapadas of the *Anguttara Nikaya*.⁵² But the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*⁵³ and the *Dāṭhavaṃsa*⁵⁴ enlist the name of Kalinga among other states which received the relics of the Buddha for worship. The *Dāṭhavaṃsa* continues the story of the tooth-relic and narrates the episode of Guhasiva who is known to have flourished in Kalinga in the 3rd-4th century A.D.

Several other Jatakas such as *Vessantara Jataka*,⁵⁵ *Kuru-dharmanā Jataka*,⁵⁶ *Serivaniya Jataka*,⁵⁷ etc. contain references to Orissa. The first two describe a great drought that occurred in Kalinga. The *Serivaniya Jataka* refers to the river Telavaha which is identified with the Tel that meets the Mahanadi at Sonapur.

The *Mahāvamsa* and *Dīpavamsa* describe the friendly relations between Ceylon and Kalinga in ancient time. The *Chulavamsa*⁵⁸ describes that in early 7th century A.D. (in the reign of Aggabodhi II) a king of Kalinga, accompanied by his queen, paid a visit to Ceylon where they joined the Order. The same source contains many interesting references about the relationship between the two countries.

A valuable information on the early history of Kalinga is supplied by the Buddhist work *Gandavyuha*^{58a} ascribed to 3rd century A.D. This work reveals that during that time there was in Kalinga region a flourishing country named Amita Tosala, the most important city of which was Tosala. Tosala of this work may be identified with Tosali of Asokan edicts.

(c) Jain Literature :

The *Avasyaka Nirvyukti*⁵⁹ reveals that Aranatha, the eighteenth Jaina Tirthankara, received his first alms in the city of Rayapura (Rajpur) which was known to be a capital city of Kalinga. It describes that Mahavira, during his itenary, underwent great sufferings at Tosali and was rescued by the timely interference of the Tosali-Kshatriyas.⁶⁰ It also contains references to Dantapura which finds frequent mention in the Buddhist literature and states that its king was Dantavakra. The *Avasyaka-Churni*⁶¹ and the *Uttaradhyayana Sutra*⁶² narrate the interesting episode of Karakandu. Among the non-cannonical literature, the *Jamvudiva-Pannatti* of Padmanandi and the *Harivamsa Purana* of Jinasena provide important source-materials for Kosala and Kalinga. A large number of works have been written on the lives of individual Tirthankaras and they throw fresh light on contemporary history of the eastern India. *Parsvanatha Charita* of Bhavadeva Suri⁶³ refers to Kalinga-Yavana invading Kusasthalapura for princess Prabhavati who at last got married to Parsvanatha. The historicity of this episode and the identification of Kalinga-Yavana is yet to be determined. The *Parisista Parvan* by Hemachandra gives authentic information about the Nandas and the Mauryas. The *Harivamsa Purana* provides a genealogy of the Chedi rulers of Chedi-rastra established by Abhichandra in Kosala region. Mahameghavahana, a king of this dynasty, conquered Kalinga and founded the Kalinga-vamsa. Kharavela was the grandson of Mahameghavahana.

(d) Foreign Accounts :

Some scholars think that the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* (1st century A.D.) refers to Orissa when it describes that "the region

of Dosarene yields large quantity of ivory known as Dosarnic".⁶⁴ The identifications of Dosarene with Odra is, however, corroborated by the Puranic literature which states that ivory was the most acceptable offering that the king of Odra would present to the Pandava monarch. Pliny in his *Naturalis Historia*,⁶⁵ ascribed to 1st century B.C., refers to the people of Oretes (Odras) in which he locates the mount Malues and further states that the territory was inhabited by the Monedes and the Suari. B. C. Law⁶⁶ objects to the identification of Oretes with Odras but does not give any alternative suggestion. In fact, there is no ground for rejecting the identification. Dr. N. K. Sahu⁶⁷ identifies Mount Malues with Malayagiri in Pallahara region. According to Cunningham,⁶⁸ the people of Monedes and Suari were the Mundas and the Suars, the tribal peoples of western Orissa. The accounts given by Pliny appear to be accurate. He gives three divisions of Orissa, viz., Gangaridae Kalinga, Kalinga proper and Macco Kalinga.⁶⁹ This division is supported by the accounts of classical Greek writers like Diodorus, Curtius, and Plutarch.⁷⁰ Megasthenes also refers to a territory called Gangaridum Calingaram Regia.⁷¹ Although Pliny gives three divisions of Kalinga, he presents a common territorial boundary and describes a single capital known as Parthalis. The city, however, has not been properly identified. According to these writers Kalinga extended from the Ganges mouth to the mouth of the river Godavari.⁷² This was, in all probability, the extension of Kalinga at the time of the invasion of Asoka in 261 B.C.

In the middle of the second century A.D., Ptolemy wrote his *Geographike Huphegesis* in which he mentioned the names of several towns and places located in Kalinga.⁷³ The most important of them was the town of Paloura or Palura which may be identified with Dandagula of Pliny and Dantapura of traditional literature. Ptolemy also refers to diamond mines near the town Kasa at the mouth of the river Adamas (identified with the modern Ib which meets the Mahanadi near Hirakud) in the territory of the Sabarai (Sambalpur).⁷⁴

The travelogues of Fahien and Hiuen-tsang are the most important Chinese sources for the history of India. Fahien did not come to Orissa and did not also refer to this province. But

Hiuen-tsang travelled widely in Orissa and described a lot of things about Odra, Kalinga, Kongoda and Kosala in his travelogue, *Si-yu-ki*. In 1904-05, Watters translated *Si-yu-ki* in two parts and named his book, *On Yuan-Chwang's Travels*. References to Orissa are found in the second part of the work. Samuel Beal also translated the *Si-yu-ki* of Hiuen-tsang in two parts and gave the name *Buddhist Record of the Western World*. He also translated the *Life of Hiuen-tsang* written by Huili. An interesting reference to Orissa is preserved in a Chinese chronicle which records that a king of Wu-cha (Odra) sent an autographed Buddhist manuscript to the Chinese emperor Tetsang.

Some Tibetan records like the works of Taranatha⁷⁵ and the *Pag-sam-Jan-zang* contain some references to ancient Orissa. But they are mostly legends and concerned with Buddhism. The Tibetan sources describe Uddiyana or Oddiyana as the cradle of Tantric Buddhism. Although there is controversy regarding the identification of Uddiyana, there are reasons to believe that it was located in the country of Orissa.

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EPIGRAPHIC SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT ORISSA

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I

EPIGRAPHICAL sources of the history of ancient Orissa may be classified as follows :

1. Pictographs
2. Edicts
3. Prasastis
4. Pratistha Sasanas
5. Land-grants

Of these categories the pictographs are the earliest examples of inscriptions of Orissa. On the walls of a cavern at Vikram-khol, situated at a distance of about 15 kilometers from Jharasuguda Railway Station on the main line of Howrah-Bombay, there is a long inscription which comprises both pictographs and ideographs. The inscribed portion of the cave is about 35'×7". The palaeography, according to some scholars may provide a link between the Indus script and the Asokan Brahmi. It was noticed by Dr. K. P. Jayaswal¹ in 1933 in the *Indian Antiquary*. Examples of pictographs are also found at Naraj near Cuttack in the coastal tract of Orissa as well as at Gudahandi and Yogi Math in the western part of Orissa. These epigraphical records have not been deciphered by scholars till today.

The earliest epigraphic sources of the historic period in Orissa are the well-known edicts of Asoka. One set of the rock edicts of Asoka is found at Dhauli near Bhubaneswar in the

Puri district and the other is at Jaugada near Purushottampur in the Ganjam district. At Dhauli and Jaugada in place of rock edict No. XI, XII and XIII there are two special Kalinga edicts. Rock edict No. XIII² which gives a graphic account of the horrors of Kalinga War of 261 B.C. is conspicuous by its absence among the rock edicts of Orissa. Obviously the Mauryan emperor did not like to remind the vanquished people about the terrible carnage and the inhuman bloodshed. Rock edict³ No. XIII tells about the bloodshed and massacre caused by the Kalinga War and Asoka's repentance which followed thereafter.

Although the victor of the Kalinga War appeared as the messenger of peace and non-violence he enforced Rajadharma in Kalinga and he was stiff with regard to the Atavikas. This is indicated by the two special Kalinga edicts⁴ which were addressed by Beloved of the Gods to the Mahamatras of Tosali and Samapa with regard to the administration of justice in Kalinga. The epigraphs are in the nature of sermons propagated by the Buddhist emperor to the people of the newly conquered territory.⁵

For a study of the history of Orissa of the post-Asokan period we depend upon the unique epigraph engraved on the Hatigumpha in Udayagiri hill near Bhubaneswar. The Hatigumpha inscription⁶ of Kharavela is in the nature of a *prāsasti*. It gives us a chronological picture of the achievements of a monarch. The panegyrist has begun his composition by saluting the Arhatas and the Siddhas and then refers to the Chedi dynasty to which Mahameghavahana Kharavela belonged. He then gives an account of the early training and education of the prince Kharavela and refers to his coronation ceremony on the completion of his twenty-fourth year. The inscription comprises sixteen lines of writing and deals with the achievements of Kharavela from his first regnal year to his thirteenth regnal year. The tone of the language and the events recorded in the epigraph reveal that the *prāsasti* is precise in its subject matter. It throws light on Kharavela's synchronism with Satakarni I and Brihaspati Mitra. Kharavela's marriage with the daughter of Hastisimha of Wairagarh, as recorded in the inscription, is the

earliest evidence of dynastic marriage in Orissan history which is a leading point for a study of inter-state relationship through matrimonial alliance. On the basis of literary evidences scholars⁷ have been inclined to suggest that the Chedis, who ruled over Kalinga, had also exerted their suzerain influence over south Kosala.

II

In the post-Kharavela period the Kushanas are known to have exerted considerable influence over the length and breadth of Orissa. Large number of Kushana and Puri-Kushana coins⁸ found scattered in various parts of Orissa lend support to this view. There is no epigraph of the Kushanas in Orissa. But the discovery of the Asanapat stone inscription⁹ has opened a new vista for the study of Kushana rule in Orissa. On palaeographical ground we have assigned the inscription to the fourth century A.D. The epigraph is partly in the nature of *prasasti* and partly in the nature of commemoration of the king's patronage to the various Saivite monasteries. In the *prasasti* portion of the epigraph King Satrubhanja of the Naga family claims to have inflicted defeat on the Devaputras, who in our opinion, were no other than the Kushanas. In fact, Harisena in the Allahabad pillar inscription of the contemporary period also refers to the Kushanas as Devaputras, who were subdued by Samudragupta. It is evident that like Samudragupta Satrubhanja vanquished the remnant of the Kushana power in Orissa by subduing the Devaputras.

Among the early stone inscriptions of Orissa the Bhadrak inscription of Maharaja Gana written in Prakrit is an interesting record. Palaeographically it has been assigned by Dr. D. C. Sircar¹⁰ to the third century A.D. Dr. K. C. Panigrahi¹¹ who has re-edited the inscription is inclined to read the name of the monarch as Maharaja Surasarma in place of Maharaja Gana. The inscription refers to the worship of three images of Brahmanical pantheon which might correspond to the trinity of

Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. A deeper study of the epigraph may throw more light on this aspect of the prevailing religious cult of the period

The next significant lithic record which throws light on the political history of south Kosala and Kalinga is the well-known Allahabad pillar inscription.¹² In lines 19 and 20 of the inscription Harisena refers to Mahendra of Kosala, Mantaraja of Kurala, Vyaghraraja of Mahakantara, Mahendragiri of Pishtapura, Swami Dutta of Kottura, Damana of Erandapalla and Kuvera of Devarashtra, who were the independent ruling chiefs of the western and southern parts of Orissa. These references indicate that on the eve of Samudragupta's invasion Orissa was divided into a number of political units and that there was no single overlord of Orissa. Samudragupta defeated the independent chiefs of Orissa, but he did not annex their territories to the Gupta empire.

The Matharas and the Vasisthas who emerged soon after the south Indian campaign of Samudragupta are known to us from fifteen sets of copperplate grants¹³ discovered in southern Orissa and northern Andhra. They ruled over the extensive coastal tract from the Mahanadi in the north to the Krishnaveni in the south in their palmy days. Ningondi copperplate grant reveals that Prabhanjanavarma¹⁴ ruled over the people of that vast region as the Lord of entire Kalinga. The Matharas who ruled from circa 350 A.D. to circa 550 A.D. were devout worshippers of Narayana and great champions of Bhagavata cult. Their copperplates were in the nature of land-grants which were actually issued in favour of learned scholars as Bhatta Vritti.

In course of their expansion of the territory when the Matharas marched as far as the Mahanadi they seem to have been checked by Maharajadhiraja Gopachandra who is known to us from his Faridpur,¹⁵ Mallasurul¹⁶ and Jayarampur¹⁷ copperplate grants. These inscriptions reveal that Gopachandra was the overlord of the vast territory extending from Faridpur in Bangla Desh to Balasore in Orissa. We learn from the Jayarampur copperplate grant that Maharajadhiraja Gopachandra was the overlord of Achyuta in the sixth century A.D. The Matharas

seem to have been checked or defeated by Gopachandra in the northern border of their territory. They were also hard-pressed by Prithivi Maharaja of Sri Ramakasyapagotra, known to us from Tandivada¹⁸ and Paralakhemandi¹⁹ copperplate grants. Prithivi Maharaja is known to have marched as far as Viraja where he is known to have issued his land-grant from a victorious military camp. These inscriptional sources indicate that the Matharas being defeated by Gopachandra in the north and Prithivi Maharaja in the south fell from political power in the middle of the sixth century A.D.

III

While the Matharas ruled over Kalinga, the Nalas emerged as powerful rulers of south Kosala with Pushkari as their capital. Kesaribeda plates of Arthapeti,²⁰ Rithapur plates of Bhavatta Varman,²¹ Podagada stone inscription of Skanda Varman²² and Rajim stone inscription of Vilasatunga²³ are the known inscriptions which throw light on the achievements of the Nalas. The Nalas are known to us not only from their inscriptions but also from their gold coins which have been found at Edenga in Bastar region of Madhya Pradesh. These coins and inscriptions indicate that the Nalas enjoyed imperial power and carved out a vast empire. Bhavattavarman is known to have occupied Nandivardhana, the capital of the Vakatakas and issued his Rithapur plates from there. He is further known to have proceeded as far as Prayaga and taken a sacred bath. It is significant to note that not far from Prayaga at Bhit Marshall²⁴ noticed a seal bearing the inscription : *Mahesvara Mahasenati srishtarajasya Vrishadhvajasya Gautamiputrasya*. The Nalas also used similar appellations in their inscriptions. Therefore, we are disposed to believe that Vrishadhvaja of the Bhit seal might be a member of the Nala dynasty.

The Nalas, however, were very soon repulsed by the Vakatakas. Their capital was captured by the enemies and it became a deserted city. Padagada stone inscription bears testimony to this fact. Balaghat plates of Prithvisena²⁵ of the Vakataka

family reveal that Narendrasena exercised his suzerainty over Mekala and Kosala. In the beginning of the sixth century A.D. Harisena of the Vatsagulma branch of the Vakataka family in course of his Digvijaya conquered south Kosala and thereby established Vakataka hegemony over the territory for sometime. This is known to us from the Ajanta cave inscription^{25a} which is assigned to the first decade of the sixth century A.D. Very soon the Vakatakas, however, fell from political power and consequently there was a political vacuum in south Kosala. In the midst of a state of anarchy there arose a powerful tribal chief called Sarabha who was the progenitor of the royal house of Sarabhapura. Sarabha is usually identified with Sarabharaja who was the maternal grandfather of Goparaja of the Erastone inscription of 510 A.D. The son and successor of Sarabha was Maharaja Narendra who is known from his Pipardula,²⁶ Kurud²⁷ and Rawan²⁸ plates. There is a gap in the genealogy of the Sarabhapuriyas after Narendra. Prasannamatra, who is known from his gold coins and the seals of Jayaraja and Sudevaraja I was the next great ruler of the Sarabhapuriyas. Prasannamatra's son and successor was Jayaraja who is known from his Amguda²⁹ plates of regnal year 3, Mallar³⁰ plates of regnal year 5, Arang plates³¹ of year 5 and Mallar³² plates of regnal year 9. In the chronology of the Sarabhapuriyas Jayaraja was a contemporary of Harshavardhana and Palakesi II and he is known to have extended the territory of Sarabhapura far and wide. Jayaraja's son and successor was Sudevaraja I known to us from his Khaier³³ plates, Raipur³⁴ plates, Saragarh³⁵ plates, Sirpur plates³⁶ and Arang plates.³⁷ During the reign of Sudevaraja there was split in the royal house and the junior lines of the family headed by Pravararaja ruled over Sripura. Pravararaja is known to us from his Thakurdiya³⁸ and Mallar plates.³⁹ During the reign of Pravararaja his brother Vyaghraraja who claimed descent from Amara-yakula was the governor of Purva rastra and he is known to us from his Mallar plates.⁴⁰ Dr. D. C. Sircar has rightly identified Amararya Kula of Sarabhapura with Amararaja Kula of south Kosala, mentioned in the Bahamani plates⁴¹ of Pandava King Bharatavala of Mekala. Pravararaja was succeeded by Durgaraja who was followed by his son Sudevaraja II, known to us from his

Mahasamund⁴² and Kāvatal⁴³ plates. During the reign of Sudevaraja II Indravala of the Pandu-vamsi line of Mekala occupied a powerful position in the state and gradually tightened his grip over the state. With Sudevaraja II there was the fall of the Sarabhapuriyas who were followed by Pandu-vamsis. With the rise of Tivaradeva the Pandu-vamsis exerted preponderating power. We learn from the Bonda⁴⁴ plates, Rajim plates,⁴⁵ Baloda⁴⁶ plates and Adhabhar⁴⁷ plates that Jivaradeva became the lord of entire Kosala. Date of Jivaradeva has been a controversial issue among scholars. Dr. V. V. Mirashi⁴⁸ assigns him to the middle of the sixth century A.D. But in our opinion⁴⁹ he was a contemporary of Dharamaraja Srimanabhita of Kongoda who flourished in the last quarter of the seventh century A.D.

IV

While the Sarabhapuriyas ruled over south Kosala, the coastal tract of Orissa was under the control of the early Gangas and the Sailodbhavas. On the eve of the decline of the Matharas there emerged two great houses, namely the Sailodbhavas and the Gangas, who occupied the northern half and the southern half of the great Kalinga empire of the Matharas respectively. Both the royal houses refer to Mahendragiri as the seat of their tutelary deity in their copper-plate grants. The early Gangas describe themselves as worshippers of Gokarnesvara Siva on the summit of Mahendragiri. They ruled from Mahendragiri in the north to the Godavari in the south. The earliest known charter of the early Gangas is the Jirjingi⁵⁰ copperplate of Ganga era 39 and it was issued by Indravarma from Dantapura. Indravarma's successor Samanta Varma is known to us from his Ponuturu plates⁵¹ which were issued from Srinivasa in Ganga era 64. Samanta Varma was succeeded by Hasti Varma who issued his Narasimhapalli⁵² charter in Ganga era 79 from Kalinganagar identified with Mukhalingam in present Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh. The Gangas were Saivites. But Hastivarma who was known as Ranabhita was a devout worshipper of Narayana, described as

the Lord of the seven worlds. This eclectic attitude marked the beginning of the synthesis of Vaisnavism and Saivism in the early medieval period.

While the early Gangas ruled over the southern part of Kalinga, the Sailodbhavas exercised their suzerainty over the northern part of Kalinga which they named as Kongoda. The Sailodbhavas are known to us from the following copperplate grants :⁵³

1. Ganjam copperplate of Madhavaraja of the time of Sasanka dated in Gupta era 300.
2. Khurdha copperplate of Madhavaraja.
3. Buguda plates of Madhavavarman.
4. Purushottampur plates of Madhavavarman.
5. Puri plates of Madhavavarman.
6. Cuttack Museum charter of Madhavavarman.
7. Banapur plates of Madhyamaraja.
8. Parikud Plates of Madhyamaraja.
9. Banapur plates of Dharmaraja.
10. Ranapur plates of Dharmaraja.
11. Chandesvara plates of Dharmaraja.
12. Puri plates of Dharmaraja.
13. Nivina plates of Dharmaraja.
14. Kondedde grant of Dharmaraja.
15. Tekkali plate of Madhyamaraja III.

In addition to these plates Nuapalli plates⁵⁴ of Chharamparaja, Sumandala⁵⁵ copperplate of Dharmaraja I and the Bhanja Palimpsest⁵⁶ are also attributed to the Sailodbhavas. Other epigraphic sources which throw light on the political condition of Orissa in the time of the early Sailodbhava Kings are Soro plates of Sambhuyasa,⁵⁷ Kanasa plates of Loka Vighraha,⁵⁸ Patiakela plates of Sivaraja,⁵⁹ Balasore copperplate grant of Sri Bhanu,⁶⁰ Soro plates of Bhanudatta,⁶¹ Olasing charter of Bhanuvardhana⁶² and Soro copperplate grant of Somadatta.⁶³

The Sailodbhava charters reveal that Pulindasena, a powerful tribal chief of Kalinga, was the progenitor of the Sailodbhava dynasty which ruled over Kongoda from circa 550 A.D. to 736 A.D. The Sailodbhavas claim in their charters that their

first king called Sailodbhava was born out of pieces of rock. Being pleased by the austerities of Pulindasena Lord Siva blessed the tribal chief and fulfilled his desire by presenting to him the King Sailodbhava who came out of pieces of rock. This story undoubtedly reveals the tribal origin of the dynasty. We know from the *Brihat Samhita*⁶⁴ that the powerful tribal people called Sailajas who were closely associated with the Pulindas flourished in the Vindhyan range. We are of the opinion⁶⁵ that Pulindasena chose a scion of the Sailaja tribe and set him up as his nominee to start a new line of kings. The rise of the tribal chief led to a Hinduised social promotion when the Sailajas in the new name of Sailodbhavas assumed sovereignty and postulated the theory of the Divine origin of kingship. This is, indeed, a subject of socio-anthropological interest in the history of India.

The Sailodbhava charters further reveal that in the later part of the sixth century A.D. they extended their territory from their homeland of Mahendragiri in the northern direction to the vicinity of the Mahanadi and named their new territory as Kongoda. They established their capital on the bank of the river Salia near Banapur in the Puri district of Orissa. Ganjam copperplate grant reveals that the capital of Kongoda was located by the side of the river Salima, which is no other than river Salia. The epigraphic evidence is well supported by the archaeological remains of Bankada near Banapur. The Sailodbhavas who were great champions of Saivism also established temples at Krishnagiri near Kodala in the Ganjam district. Ganjam copperplate grant refers to Krishnagiri *vishaya*, which is certainly identical with Krishnagiri hill near Kodala. The said epigraph further refers to Maharajadhiraja Sasanka, the arch-enemy of Harsha, as the overlord of Madhavavarman. Sasanka was the Lord of entire eastern India with Karnasuvarna as his capital. Midnapore copperplates⁶⁶ of Somadatta and Subhakirtti reveal that Sasanka was the overlord of Dandabhukti and Utkala. Sasanka's supremacy over Kongoda in the first quarter of the seventh century A.D. was followed by Madhavavarman's rise as Lord of entire Kalinga. This is known to us from the undated Khurdha copperplate grant. But very soon he was involved in

the Indian politics of the seventh century A.D. due to the imperial designs of Harsha and Pulakesi in Orissa. For a short period he had to acknowledge the suzerainty of Harsha, as we learn from the *Life of Hiuen Tsiang*.⁶⁷ But very soon he established himself as an independent sovereign and as the Purushottampur plates reveal that he performed Vajapeya and Asvamedha sacrifices. Cuttack Museum charter reveals that he was a friend of Lokanatha who seems to be identical with Lokanatha of Samatata region, mentioned in the Tipperah copperplate grant.⁶⁸

V

Under Dharmaraja alias Srimanabhita Kongoda was engaged in a serious war with south Kosala. The war arose out of a fratricidal struggle between Dharmaraja and his younger brother Madhava. In this war Jivaradeva supported the cause of Madhava and suffered from heavy reverses at the hands of Dharmaraja. Dr. V. V. Mirashi⁶⁹ thinks that Jivaradeva was a contemporary of Visnu-kundin King Madhavavarma and as such he belonged to the sixth century A.D. But we know from the history of south Kosala that the Sarabhapuriyas ruled over parts of western Orissa and eastern Madhya Pradesh from the end of the fifth century A.D. to the last quarter of the seventh century A.D. The Sarabhapuriyas were ousted by the Panduvamsis who under Jivaradeva exercised sovereignty over the whole of south Kosala.⁷⁰ Dharmaraja alias Srimanabhita also belonged to the same period in the chronology of the Sailodbhavas.

The successors of Dharmaraja alias Srimanabhita were shadowy figures in the annals of ancient Orissa. We learn from the Tekkali copperplate grant that they lost their hold over Kongoda in the eighth century A.D. With the rise of the Bhaumakaras⁷¹ in 736 A.D. the Sailodbhavas disappeared from the political scene of Kongoda. This is well supported by the testimony of the Ganjam copperplate grant of Jayavarma⁷² which records the grant of a village in Kongoda Mandala during the reign of the Bhauma King Unmatta Kesari.⁷³

A close study of the inscriptions of ancient Orissa indicates

that writing evolved in Orissa at least as early as circa 1500 B.C. when pictographs along with ideographs were engraved on the cavern of Vikramkhola. In the third century B.C. inscriptions of Asoka at Dhauli and Jaugada assumed the nature of edicts. Khara-vela's Hatigumpha inscription engraved in the first century B.C. is a *prasasti*, but it is without any exaggeration. Asanapat stone inscription and Bhadrak stone inscription are commemorative and their purpose was to establish cult images. The copperplate charters of the Matharas, the Nalas, the Sarabhapuriyas, the Panduvamsis, the early Gangas and the Sailodbhavas were of the nature of land-grants which indicated the triumph of Brahmanical Hinduism in the Gupta and the post-Gupta periods.

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NUMISMATIC SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT ORISSA

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I

The coins of ancient Orissa may broadly be classified according to their characteristics and grouped thus— (i) The Punch-marked coins, (ii) The Kusana coins and their prototypes, (iii) The Gupta gold coins, (iv) The coins of Śatavāha Nanda, (v) The Nala coins, and (vi) The Śaśabhapurīya coins.

The Punchmarked Coins

The punchmarked coins, the earliest coin variety of Orissa, have been discovered in large quantities from Bahalada (192 coins) in Mayurbhanj district,¹ Sompur (162 coins) in Balangir district,² Jagmara (48 coins),³ Jharpada (10 coins)⁴ and Sisupalgarh (10 coins)⁵ in the suburbs of Bhulaneswar in Puri district, Salipur (376 coins) in Cuttack district;⁶ and Asurgarh (539 coins) in Boud Phulbani district.⁷ Irregularly shaped like their counterparts from other regions of India, these punchmarked coins are all in silver except nine copper finds from Sisupalgarh.

The silver punchmarked coins discovered so far are of thin fabric or of medium thickness or thickly bold, and weigh between 19 to 21 grains or 2.5 to 3.5 grammes corresponding to the 12 rati standard of coins called the *Artha Karupana*. They were clipped on the edges for the proper adjustment of their weights.

The coins which were in circulation for a longer period have lightly punched checking marks on their flat reverse while those which were in short circulation do not have the impressions of

the checking marks. All the coins, however, bear one to five bold punching devices on their obverse. Among the devices mention may be made of sun with sixteen rays, six-knobbed wheel or the *Sadarachakra*, crescent moon, bow and arrow, arched hills and gateways, tree with branches on either side of the stem or that inside a railing, various types of animals, birds, reptiles and human figures, floral designs, and geometrical patterns like the taurine, circle, dot and curved line.

It is difficult to determine the exact chronology of these silver punchmarked coins although they may be assigned, on various grounds, to the pre-Mauryan, Mauryan, and post-Mauryan periods of ancient Indian history.

The pre-Mauryan silver punchmarked coins are of thin fabric⁸ having, on the obverse, devices like sun with sixteen rays, six-knobbed wheel, different types of animals, birds, reptiles, trees, hills, floral designs, and various geometrical patterns, and on the reverse, minute checking marks.⁹ The entire Bahalada and Sonpur hoard, 369 coins of the Salipur hoard, and 69 coins of the Asurgarh hoard, have the above features and have been assigned to the pre-Mauryan period¹⁰ in Orissa covering the rule of the legendary thirty-two 'Kalingas' and the Nandas.

The silver punchmarked coins of the Mauryan period are of medium fabric¹¹ and have a crescent above three arched hills along with other known devices on the obverse, and slightly bolder checking symbols on the reverse.¹² Of our finds, 9 coins of the Salipur hoard and 272 coins of the Asurgarh hoard have the above characteristics and have been assigned to the period of Mauryan rule in Orissa.¹³

The post-Mauryan silver coins of the punchmarked variety are of thick fabric¹⁴ and have neatly punched devices on the obverse and bold checking marks on the reverse.¹⁵ Of our coins, 198 of the Asurgarh hoard and all from Jagmara and Jharpada have been attributed to the post-Mauryan period¹⁶ in Orissa which witnessed the glorious reign of emperor Kharavela.

One silver and nine copper punchmarked coins, discovered from Sisupalgarh in stratigraphical levels attributable to c. 50-200 A.D.,¹⁷ form the latest variety of punchmarked coinage in Orissa. The silver coin is square-sized, weighing 1.5 grammes and has a

cluster of four punchmarked devices on the obverse, and some bold checking marks on the reverse.¹⁸ The copper coins weighing between 2 to 3 grammes are either rectangular or round-shaped and are in a completely worn out condition.¹⁹

These punchmarked coins of Orissa constitute an important source for the study of her economic condition and currency system before the Christian era, providing indications of economic prosperity through regular trade and commerce with other states of India by the land and water route. They were manufactured in local mints under imperial patronage. Two terracotta coin moulds having sockets of different sizes have been found at Sisupalgarh along with fourteen lead punchmarked coins datable to the third-fourth century A.D.²⁰ They suggest the minting of punchmarked coins of various sizes and their circulation in Orissa as late as the fourth century A.D.

Needless to say that the punchmarked coins invite a study of their features in a more systematic manner for their relative chronology which is yet to be satisfactorily established. The devices on the coins form an interesting subject of enquiry as they bear a striking resemblance with similar devices found on the early punchmarked coins of Northern India.

II

THE KUSANA COINS AND THEIR PROTOTYPES

Large hoards of Kusana coins and their imitations called 'Puri-Kusana'²¹ or 'Oriya-Kusana'²² coins have been unearthed from different regions of Orissa. The earliest hoard of these coins was found at Jaugarh²³ near Purusottampur in Ganjam district as early as 1858 by Walter Elliot. J. D. Beglar, who studied these coins, found them to be of the Indo-Scythian type.²⁴ In 1893 A. F. R. Hoernle discovered a similar hoard of 573 copper coins from Gurbai near Manikpatana in Puri district²⁵ out of which 25 coins were subsequently lost. He examined the remaining 548 coins and found 47 of them to be Indo-Scythian, the rest all being imitation coins.²⁶

In 1912 the Collector of Balasore recovered a hoard of 910 Indo-Scythian coins²⁷ and sent them to the Asiatic Society of Bengal. These coins are now preserved in the Indian Museum. In 1923 a similar hoard of 282 copper coins were located at Bhanjakkia near Khiching in Mayurbhanj district²⁸ and in 1924 the discovery of such coins was reported from the Viratgarh excavation site in the same district.²⁹ In 1939 about 105 imitation Kusana coins were unearthed at Nuagaon in the vicinity of Bhanjakkia³⁰ and in 1947 a hoard of 135 Kusana coins and their prototypes were uncovered at Sitabinjhi in Keonjhar district.³¹ In the following year the Sisupalgarh excavation yielded two Kusana and four imitation coins.³² In 1953 the Bhanjakkia region once again yielded a hoard of 1060 imitation coins and one coin of Kaniska.³³ In 1960 such a hoard of coins was discovered from Bhilingi in Ganjam district³⁴ while another hoard was traced at the Kayema hill near Dharamsala in the Jajpur subdivision of Cuttack district.³⁵ Such coins have also been found in hoards at Rakha hills in the Singhbhum district of Bihar³⁶ and at Tamluk in the Midnapore district of West Bengal.³⁷

These hoards contain the copper coins of Kaniska and Huviska, and their imitations. A unique gold coin of one king Dharmadamadhara, discovered from Sisupalgarh in the levels datable to the third century A.D.,³⁸ has been associated with these coins³⁹ as its obverse resembles the coin-type of Vasudeva I. All the coins are circular in shape and weigh between 80 and 260 grains.

The copper coins of Kaniska in our collections have, on the obverse, a kingly figure standing to left, wearing a heavy long tunic, a trouser and a low round cap, offering incense or sacrifice at an altar with his right hand, and holding a long spear in his left hand. On the reverse of these coins are seen the deities : MAO (the Moon god), MIIRA or MIHIRA or MITHRA (the Sun god), OADO (the Wind god), NANA (the Nature goddess), ATHSHO (the Fire god), and ARDOKSHO (the goddess of prosperity).

The copper coins of Huviska in our finds bear, on the obverse, a king mounted on an elephant holding an *Ankusa* in

the left hand and a spear in the right or a king seated cross-legged or a king reclining in a couch. They have on the reverse one of the deities listed above, or the Greek hero Heracles, or the Indian god Siva. The imitation coins, struck on the model of the coins of Kaniska and Huviska, mostly have rude figures of a king and a deity on both the sides.

The gold coin from Sisupalgarh has on the obverse a king standing to left, dressed in a long coat, trouser and a peaked helmet, making an offering with right hand at an altar, and holding a long spear in the left hand. A *Brahmi* legend at the bottom of the obverse reads '(Ma)-(hara)-ja-ra-(ja)-dhasa-Dharmadamadhara(sa)' or 'Maharaja-Rajadhiraja-Dharmadamadharasya'.⁴⁰ The reverse of the coin bears the copy of a Roman head with legend 'HAIEAI-ZANAI'.⁴¹

There is a great deal of controversy among scholars regarding the relative chronology of the Kusana coins and their prototypes of Orissa. E. J. Rapson assigned the imitation coins to the first three centuries of the Christian era.⁴² V. A. Smith,⁴³ Allan,⁴⁴ T. N. Ramachandran⁴⁵ and P. Acharya⁴⁶ placed them in the fourth-fifth centuries A.D. R. D. Banerji relegated them to the sixth-seventh centuries A.D.⁴⁷ S. K. Bose⁴⁸ and N. K. Sahu⁴⁹ hold the view that these coins were issued during the Murunda rule in Eastern India sometime in the second-third centuries A.D., and P. L. Gupta,⁵⁰ basing his observations on the gold coin of Dharmadamadhara assignable to the third century A.D., suggests a time for these coins after the disintegration of the Kusana empire in Northern India. D. K. Ganguly finds close contemporaneity between the imitation coins and their Kusana originals and ascribes them to a probable period of Kusana supremacy in Orissa sometime in the first-second centuries A.D.⁵¹

Although it is difficult to resolve the dispute over the probable time of issue and authorship of these imitation Kusana coins, there is little doubt over the fact that these coins were used as currencies in the commercial transactions of local trade in Orissa in the early Christian centuries. That they differ stylistically from the Kusana originals is proved by the crude features they have on the obverse and reverse demonstrating poor workmanship.

In all likelihood, the Kusana coins, manufactured by the imperial mint, travelled to Orissa as exchanges in trade during the Kusana rule in Northern India. After a lapse of time when the supply of these coins became inadequate, exact prototypes of such coins were made in local mints under the patronage of provincial governors owing allegiance to the Imperial Kusanas. This is brought out by the discovery of Kusana coins along with the imitation coins, and by the gold coin of Dharmadamadhara having Kusana characteristics.

The Kusana coins and their prototypes, and the gold coin of Dharmadamadhara form the principal source for the Kusana-Murunda supremacy in Orissa in the early Christian centuries. They have been fully utilised by scholars who have attempted to reconstruct this part of Orissan history obscurely known. Besides, these coins supply important information on Orissa's commercial contact with the Kusana empire and her currency system during this period.

III

THE GUPTA GOLD COINS

In 1939 three gold coins of the archer type were discovered from Bhanupur village situated on the left bank of the Son river in Mayurbhanj district,⁵² and subsequently in 1944-45 a hoard of similar coins was unearthed at Panchpir near Khiching in Mayurbhanj district, of which only one coin could be recovered.⁵³ In 1951 one such gold coin was found in the Angul subdivision of Dhenkanal district.⁵⁴ While the four gold coins from Mayurbhanj are attributed to the Imperial Gupta king Chandragupta II,⁵⁵ the only coin from Angul subdivision is assigned to his son Kumaragupta I.⁵⁶

All the coins bear a common device on the obverse : a king standing to left, holding a bow in his left hand and an arrow in his right ; the Garuda standard and Chandra or Kumara are seen at proper places.⁵⁷ On the reverse of these coins are

found : goddess Lakshmi sitting on lotus with her legs folded, holding a flower in her left hand and a noose in the right ; the legend is seen on the right side.⁵⁸ All of them are circular shaped and weigh between 120 to 130 grains.

The Gupta gold coins which might have come to Orissa by way of exchange in trade and commerce suggest a period of Imperial Gupta suzerainty over Orissa though she never formed a part of the Gupta empire. The Gupta political influence, proved by some epigraphic records and archaeological remains of Orissa assigned to the sixth-seventh centuries A.D., marked the rise of many independent kingdoms in different regions of Orissa and a steady growth of her maritime trade and commerce.

THE COINS OF SU(SRI)NANDA

In 1952 a hoard of 147 copper coins were discovered from village Nanduru near Gandibedha in Balasore district.⁵⁹ The coins, weighing between 1 to 2.5 grammes, are circular shaped and are of five different sizes.⁶⁰ All of them have on the obverse a couchant bull and on the reverse a legend consisting of four alphabets of box-headed character reading '*Su(Sri)-nanda-vu(sya)*'.⁶¹ Paleographically the alphabets belong to the fifth century A.D.⁶² which presupposes that king Su(Sri)nanda ruled at that time.

While S. N. Rajguru identifies Su(Sri)nanda with a ruler of the Mathara dynasty of Kalinga,⁶³ N. K. Sahu takes him to be a predecessor of king Sambhuyasa of the Mana dynasty of *Uttara Tosala*.⁶⁴ Both the identifications are hypothetical in nature and hence, much reliance cannot be placed upon them. It can only be said that Su(Sri) nanda was a ruler of Utkala or *Uttara Tosala* (modern Cuttack-Balasore districts) sometime in the fifth century A.D. and was a *Saiva* by faith. The coins probably manufactured by a local mint of Orissa, explain their use in trade as a currency.

IV

THE NALA COINS

A hoard of gold coins of the Nala kings of Puskari was discovered at Edenga in the Kondagaon tahsil of Bastar district in 1939 of which thirty-two coins belonging to three rulers of the dynasty have been recovered.⁶⁶ The coins, all of the single die type, have on the obverse, a couchant bull and crescent with a legend embossed in relief, and a blank reverse.⁶⁶ Ten of them measure between 20 and 21 millimeters in diameter and weigh from 19.7 to 24.6 grains each, while the other twenty-two measure about 15 millimeters in diameter and weigh 7.5 grains each.⁶⁷ The device and the legend are divided by some horizontal lines.⁶⁸ All the coins are circular shaped and are of three main sizes.⁶⁹ Of them, seven coins of the larger size and all the twenty-two coins of smaller size belong to Varaharaja,⁷⁰ while the remaining three coins belong to Bhavadatta or Bhavadattavarman⁷¹ of Rithapur plates⁷² and Podagada stone inscription,⁷³ and to Arthapati or Arthapati Bhattaraka⁷⁴ of Kesaribeda plates.⁷⁵

The coins have been assigned to the fifth-sixth centuries A.D. as the character of the script of the legend found on them is of box-headed variety.⁷⁶ Chronologically, the coins of Varaharaja are earlier than the coins of Bhavadatta and Arthapati.⁷⁷ It is curious to note that while the name of Varaharaja in the legend of his coins is in nominative, that of Bhavadatta and Arthapati are in genitive.

The coins of the three kings of Nala dynasty help us in reconstructing the genealogy of the dynasty by providing the name of Varaharaja who is otherwise unknown. They further establish that king Varaha was a predecessor of Bhavadatta and Arthapati and that all of them were Saivas. Besides, they suggest the prosperity of the Nala kingdom which, in its palmy days, included a part of the Vakataka empire, and south Kosala.⁷⁸

The hoard, struck on an indigenous weight standard, was meant for use in local trade in the heartland of the Nala kingdom, the Bastar-Koraput regions. Further discovery of such coins may prove their transactions in neighbouring areas.

V

THE SARABHAPURIYA COINS

A set of gold and silver coins belonging to king Prasannamatra of *Amararyakula* of Sarabhapura in south Kosala came to light during the past half-a-century. The earliest notice of these types of coins was made by L. P. Pandeya⁷⁹ and S. K. Saraswati⁸⁰ who recovered two coins each from the Chhatisgarh region of Madhya Pradesh. In 1926-27 a hoard of 47 gold coins of Prasannamatra was reported from Brahmapur in the Gadabanki area of Cuttack district.⁸¹ After some years the Nagpur Museum secured six coins of the same king from the Chhatisgarh area.⁸² In 1948 a hoard of thirty coins was discovered from Khairtal in the Chhatisgarh district,⁸³ and in 1954 few such coins were reported from the Chanda district of Maharashtra.⁸⁴ Very recently four gold coins of this variety were secured from Kalahandi for the numismatic section of the Sambalpur University Museum.⁸⁵

All the gold coins measure between .71" and .72" in diameter and weigh between 16 and 17 grains. They are circular in shape. The obverse has, within a circle of dots round the edge of the coin, goddess Lakshmi standing on a lotus with a *prabhamandala* or halo round her head and flanked by two elephants on either side holding garlands in their trunks. A cluster of seven dots is found at the feet of the goddess. A horizontal line divides the device from the legend reading '*Sri Prasannamatra(sya)*' and written in the box-headed script of fifth-sixth centuries A.D. In some coins a *ghata* or *kalasa* is found below the legend.

The silver coins, which are of the same measurement and weight as the gold coins, have on the obverse, within a circle of dots along the edge, a Garuda figure, a crescent, a *chakra* enriched by dots, a *saura-chinha* (the Sun symbol), and a *sankha* or conch. The legend and the character of the script are also same as the gold coins.

The gold and silver coins of Prasannamatra discussed above, bear out a few facts relating to the history of his reign. Apart

from justifying his independent status, they suggest that he was a *Paramabhayavata* devoted to Lord Vishnu and his consort Lakshmi. Besides, the wide circulation of these coins explain their transactions in the kingdoms neighbouring south Kosala which was an important centre of trade during this period. Only a proper utilisation of the coins would establish these themes.

Another set of repousse gold coins belonging to one king Mahendraditya have been discovered from Khairtal⁸⁶ (twenty-four) and Madanpur-Rampur⁸⁷ (one). One such coin is secured by the Lucknow Museum⁸⁸ from the Chhatisgarh region. All the coins measure between .78" and .87" in diameter and weigh from 19 to 20.2 grains. The obverse of these coins bear the devices found on the silver coins of king Prasannamatra with some minor changes here and there, and have a legend reading '*Sri Mahendraditya*', and written in the box-headed variety of *Brahmi* script resembling the script of Prasannamatra's coins.⁸⁹

Two sets of opinions are forthcoming regarding the identification of king Mahendraditya of these coins. While B. C. Jain,⁹⁰ P. Dayal,⁹¹ V. P. Rode,⁹² and V. V. Mirashi⁹³ attribute these coins to Kumaragupta I Mahendraditya of the Imperial Gupta family, A. Ghose,⁹⁴ A. S. Altekar,⁹⁵ and P. L. Mishra⁹⁶ take him to be a local ruler of south Kosala. Taking a cue from the latter theory, a scholar^{97a} has recently identified Mahendraditya with a ruler of the same name of *Amararyakula* of Sarabhapura and has placed him between Narendra and Prasannamatra in the chronology of the dynasty. The identification seems to be quite satisfactory as the coins of Mahendraditya closely resemble the silver coins of Prasannamatra.

The coins of Mahendraditya thus have a bearing on the early history of the kings of Sarabhapura who held sway over south Kosala during the sixth-seventh centuries A.D. They suggest that king Mahendraditya was a devotee of Lord Vishnu like Prasannamatra and was independent of foreign yoke.

The survey of the coins of ancient Orissa made above, indicates their importance as a source-material for the history of Orissa in ancient times and invite a painstaking study of their features for the discovery of revealing facts.

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Medieval Period

INSCRIPTIONS AS A SOURCE OF MEDIEVAL ORISSA HISTORY

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I

THE INSCRIPTIONS on stones and copperplates, issued in medieval Orissa by kings, subordinate rulers and their officers of different ranks as well as by those who may be termed as private individuals, far exceed in number of those that have been discovered during the corresponding period in any other Indian State, with the solitary exception of the southerly State of Tamil Nadu which has yielded the largest number of such epigraphic records. The peculiarity of Orissan inscriptions lies not only in the largeness of their quantum but also in the variety of the languages, contents and scripts, found therein.

II

LANGUAGES AND SCRIPTS IN ORISSAN INSCRIPTIONS

The Bhauma Kara kings, who founded their kingdom on the Orissan coast around the middle of the eighth century A.D.¹ or at a subsequent date, as upheld by D. C. Sircar² and the present author,³ issued inscriptions in Sanskrit, a practice which was, likewise, adopted by the early Ganga kings of Kalinganagara from about the beginning of the sixth century A.D. onwards. Sanskrit inscriptions continued to be issued by the kings of some minor dynasties like the Bhanjas of Khinjali and Khijjinga, the

Sulkis of Kodalaka-*mandala*, the Tungas of Yamagarta-*mandala* and the Nandas of Airavatta-*mandala*, as well as by the Somavamsis and the Imperial Ganga rulers, although some of these kings⁴ from about the thirteenth century A.D. onwards evinced their genuine interest in the issue of Oriya inscriptions as well. Sometime bilingual inscriptions were issued, showing the simultaneous use of Sanskrit and Oriya as was the case with the Puri plates⁵ of Narasimha IV (c. 1378-1402 A.D.), being written partly in Sanskrit and partly in Oriya and of the use of Tamil and Oriya, as was the case with the Bhubaneswar inscription of the time of Ganga Narasimha II (1378-1402).⁶ The same practice was continued by the Gajapati kings during whose reign, inscriptions wholly either in Sanskrit or in Oriya, like the Balasore copper axe-head inscription⁷ of Purusottama, or partly in Sanskrit and partly in Oriya or partly in Sanskrit, partly in Oriya and partly in Telugu, like the Veligalani grant⁸ of Kapilesvara (c. 1436-1466 A.D.), were issued. Sanskrit inscriptions were written in the well-known derivatives of Brahmi like the *Siddhamatrika*, *Kutila* and proto-Bengali scripts but Oriya epigraphs which were first written in the proto-Bengali alphabet, gradually came to show the use of the Oriya alphabet in most cases and, of the Telugu characters, in others. With the passage of time the use of the Oriya language and script in inscriptions gained momentum and the popularity of Sanskrit, which was universally adopted throughout Orissa as the vehicle of expression in both private and official documents for centuries, was steadily on the wane.

III

IMPORTANCE OF INSCRIPTIONS

The importance of these inscriptions as a useful source of information for the reconstruction of medieval Orissan history is easily conceivable when it is borne in mind that in the case of medieval Orissa we hardly come across a regular historical chronicle of the type of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*.

Indeed, inscriptions constitute a unique store-house of information regarding the political and various facets of the cultural life of the people of Orissa throughout the whole of the ancient and medieval period.

IV

IMPORTANCE FOR POLITICAL HISTORY

The importance of inscriptions for the study of the political history of medieval Orissa may best be illustrated with the help of the copperplate grants, issued by the kings and reigning queens of the Bhauma Kara ruling house of Guhadevapataka or Guhes-varapataka in or around Jajpur in Cuttack district. No less than eighteen members of this royal family are known to us at present, yet strangely enough, none of these rulers does find the mention of his bare name in any of the extant literary works, indigenous as well as foreign. Inscriptions have rescued their names from the limbo of oblivion; they have provided us with the richness of details about the activities of these royal personages in the arena of politics and cultural pursuits, besides enabling us to arrange their reigns in proper chronological sequences. The case of queen Tribhuvanamahadevi I Sindagauri may be cited in this connection as an illustration. This queen, who is passed over in silence in literary documents, is represented in her Dhenkanal plate,⁹ which was issued in the Bhauma era 120, to have assumed the reins of government of the Bhauma Kara kingdom in imitation of Gosvamini of ancient times at the pursuance of her feudatories. According to the testimony of one of the Talcher grants,¹⁰ issued by a later king of the family, she subsequently abdicated the throne in favour of her grandson Santikara II alias Gayada II or Lonabhara (Lavanabhara) when the latter became sufficiently grown-up. Thus a combined study of the Talcher and Dhenkanal copperplate grants would unmistakably vouchsafe some interesting but otherwise unknown episodes of the political life of medieval Orissa like the assumption of rulership by a queen, active involvement of the feudatories in court-politics,

abdication of the throne by a ruler in favour of a descendant on the latter's attainment of maturity, and the like. Without citing any more illustrations, it may reasonably be contended that had inscriptions been not available as our guides, dark patches would have eclipsed the spectrum of the political history of medieval Orissa.

V

IMPORTANCE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

Glimpses of the political and administrative structure of the medieval Orissan kingdoms, including those of the Bhauma Karas, Somavamsis, Imperial Gangas and Gajapatis are scattered all through inscriptions. These records would invariably refer to the king as the king-pin of the State and fountain-head, at least theoretically, of all powers, executive, judicial, revenue and military, proving thereby the prevalence of monarchy as the normal and sole form of government during the period of our investigation. The evidence of inscriptions in this respect may be treated as positive for neither in contemporary indigenous literature nor in the accounts of foreign travellers does one come across any faintest indication in favour of the existence of a non-monarchical form of government in any part of Orissa during the corresponding period. The references to such technical terms as *mahamandala*, *mandala*, *visaya*, *bhukti*, *panchali*, *bhoga*, *rastra*, *pataka*, *grama*, *mantri*, *amatya*, *sandhivigrahika*, *visayapati*, *antaranga*, *mahapratihara*, *sarvadhikrita*, *gramapati*, *dvarapariksha*, *budhalenka*, *bhandaria*, *thau poropariksha*, *mahapatra*, *patra*, *bhitara-bhandara-adhikari*, etc. to be met with in the inscriptions of the kings of different dynasties, when critically analysed and studied, would bring to light the existence of different administrative units into which a kingdom was partitioned for the purpose of efficient administration, and of the existence of a hierarchy of officials, employed in different offices, both in the centre and in the provinces and districts. Interesting details about the workings of many of the administrative offices in medieval Orissa

are found embedded in the accounts of inscriptions. An inscription¹¹ of the Imperial Ganga king Anangabhima II speaks of a learned Brahmin minister named Govinda aś bearing the burden of the whole of the Ganga kingdom, and participating in important expeditions, leading to the expansion of the Ganga kingdom in the north, west and south. The testimony of the said epigraph may profitably be utilised for ascertaining some important facts about the ministers of contemporary Orissa like the occasional employment of Brahmins as ministers, recognition of proficiency in Brahmanical literature as administrative qualification, inclusion of warlike activities within the purview of normal ministering duties, etc. It is worth noticing in this context that some of these official titles in course of centuries have degenerated into mere surnames, still current in Orissa.

VI

IMPORTANCE FOR RELIGIOUS HISTORY

Since many of the inscriptions are religious grants, made in favour of priests and temples, it is not unoften that we are furnished with information not only about the different religious systems such as Jainism, Buddhism, Saivism, Vaisnavism, solar cult, etc. which flourished in Orissa during this period but also about the management, sources of income, functions and maintenance staff of the various religious establishments which grew up in different parts of Orissa.¹² The Hindol copperplates, for instance, state that the Bhauma Kara king Subhakara III, a great patron of Saivism, granted the village of Noddilo in Uttara Tosali to god Vaidyanatha-bhattaraka with the instruction that the revenue of half of the village was to be utilised for *tapana*, scents, flower, lamps, incense, *naivedya*, *bali*, *charu* and *pūja* of the god, as well as for the maintenance of the temple servants and the repair of the temple, while the revenue of the other half was to be kept apart for the supply of *śatra*, garments, etc. of ascetics.¹³ A critical etymological analysis of the names of the localities and donees, occurring in inscriptions, is likely to enlighten us on the

popularity and decline of different sects and cults in specific areas and times.

VII

IMPORTANCE FOR SOCIAL HISTORY

References to the Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, Sudras, and various occupational groups, lying scattered throughout inscriptions have proved to be immensely useful for studying the operational aspect of the *varna* and *jati* systems in medieval Orissa. The precedence of the Brahmin community over others in the social hierarchy is amply manifest; they were the mostly referred to persons in inscriptions and greatest beneficiaries of royal patronage in the form of land-grants of varying sizes. Although the main functions, performed by the Brahmanas were the study and teaching of the *Vedas* and performance of religious rites, references to them as being engaged in astrology, envoyship, composition of charters, martial pursuits, civil services, management of village affairs, usury, etc. and being ever keen in migrating from place to place and kingdom to kingdom in quest of prospect are quite numerous in inscriptions. Gone were the days when travel beyond the traditional limit of *Arya-desa* entailed penance and residence was forbidden. Interesting social institutions and customs like the institution of *devadasis*, i.e., the practice of dedicating maidens to the gods for services in the form of music and dance, in temples, find mention, in most cases casually, in several epigraphic records.¹⁴

VIII

IMPORTANCE FOR AGRARIAN HISTORY

Likewise, inscriptions embody interesting details about the different types of land tenure (such as *nivi-dharma*, *akshaya-nivi-dharma* and *bhumi-chhidra-pidhana-nyaya*), land measurement

(like *hala*, *vati*, *putti*, *nala*, *muraja*, etc.), agricultural produce, crafts, industries and trade both internal and foreign. References to coins and markets (*hatta*) in Orissan inscriptions of this period, which are quite numerous, are of great interest for ascertaining the true nature of the role of trade and monetary economy in the life of the medieval Orissan people. Sometime inscriptions serve as a useful guide for ascertaining the delimitation and area of a village or a town, number and categories of artisans and craftsmen, inhabiting it and quantum and typology of the houses, located within the area. Reference, in this context, may be made to the Nagari plates¹⁵ of the Imperial Ganga king Anangabhima III, dated c. A.D. 1229-30, which speak of a thirteenth century Orissan township covering thirty *vatis* of land of which twenty *vatis* were cornfields and ten *vatis* were homestead land. The township contained four palatial houses with walls, *mukha-mandapas* and *madhya-mandapas* and thirty other ordinary houses, constituting the residence of a number of artisans and craftsmen such as a perfumer (*gandhika*), a worker or dealer in conch shells (*samkhika*), a splitter of wood (*patakara*), a goldsmith (*svarnakara*), a brazier (*pittelaka*), a worker in bell-metal (*kamsyika*), three cellers of betal leaf (*tambulika*), a florist (*malika*), a manufacturer or dealer in sugar (*gaudika*), two milkmen (*gopala*), two weavers (*tantuvaya*), two oilmen (*tailika*), two potters (*kumbhakara*), three fishermen (*kaivarta*) and a barber (*napita*).

IX

IMPORTANCE FOR REVENUE SYSTEM

A study of the medieval Orissan epigraphs against the backdrop of those of the earlier period would bring to light a steady increase in the number of taxes, imposed by the State. Whereas, the Chicacole plates¹⁶ of the early Ganga king Indravarman III, dated c. A.D. 626, speak of two kinds of taxes, comprising *bhoga*, periodical supplies of fruits, firewood, flowers, etc. and *bhaga*, royal share of the produce, one hears of about fifteen of such

taxes in the Balijhari plates¹⁷ of the Somavamsi king Udyotakesarin, and of thirty-six kinds of taxes in the Velicherla grant¹⁸ of the Gajapati king Prataparudradeva, issued at about the beginning of the sixteenth century A.D.

X

LIMITATIONS OF EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

The task of reconstructing history on the basis of epigraphic records is, however, not an easy proposition. The authenticity of epigraphic evidence is unimpeachable in those cases when it stands corroborated by other sources while it is disparaged as unhistorical in the vast majority of cases. Generally speaking, the authors of inscriptions, particularly of *prasastis*, served as court-poets of kings and indulged, for reasons not difficult to imagine, in glorifying the achievements of their patrons, some time beyond limits, and suppressing unpalatable facts about their masters. The Bhubaneswar inscription describes Kapilendra as having conquered Karnata, Gulbarga, Malava, Delhi and Gauda. Although Kapilendra succeeded in establishing a vast kingdom which in its palmy days stretched from Midnapore in Bengal to Trichinopoly in Tamil Nadu, there is as yet no evidence in favour of his alleged conquest of Malava and Delhi. The title *Gaudesvara-navakoti-Karnata-Kalavargessvara*, i.e., lord of Gauda, Karmata-nine-crores and Kalabarga (Gulbarga), was applied to a large number of kings from Kapilendra onwards, although the rule of the majority of them was confined to a small fragment of Orissa only.

The importance of inscriptions as historical documents is, likewise, considerably diminished by frequent occurrences of contrary statements about facts and events in them. The date of the accession of the Imperial Ganga king Kamarnava, the son and successors of Anantavarman Codaganga, is, for example, correctly quoted in the Dasgoba¹⁹ and Nagari plates²⁰ of A.D. 1198 and 1230-31 respectively, as the Saka year, counted by *nanda* (9), *ritu* (6), *vyoma* (0) and *chandra* (1), which in accordance

to the *Vama-gati* principle, would yield Saka year 1069, corresponding to A.D. 1147. This is not in harmony with the testimony of the later records of the family, which wrongly read *Veda* (4) instead of *nanda* (9), thus making the date five years earlier. Besides this or other kinds of discrepancies to be met with in inscriptional records, the evidences, derived from epigraphic records are often found to be in contradistinction with the testimony of other sources. Thus whereas, the Kenduli copper-plates²¹ attribute the construction of the present temple of Jagannatha to the Imperial Ganga monarch Anantavarman Codaganga (c. A.D. 1077-1147), the *Madala panji*²² represents king Anangabhimha III as the real founder of the famous temple at Puri. Another serious demerit of epigraphic evidence is that the facts and events, as recorded in inscriptions, cannot, in most cases, be arranged in terms of definite chronology, for the reason that many of these records are left undated and even the dated ones are reckoned in some obsolete eras like the Ganga²³ and Bhauma Kara eras the actual coincidence of which with the well-known Christian reckoning still defies a unanimously accepted solution. Finally, inscriptions, not only of Orissa alone but also of the other parts of the Indian sub-continent, which were engraved on stones or copperplates, mostly by illiterate and semi-literate stone-cutters or goldsmiths, often betray serious errors which have rendered the interpretation of the text difficult and controversial.

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- ² *IHQ*, XXIX, 148ff ; *IE*, 297ff.
- ³ *Historical Geography and Dynastic History of Orissa*, 196ff.
- ⁴ The Imperial Ganga Kings Narasimha I and Bhanu I were amongst the early Orissan kings to issue inscriptions in Oriya (*EI*, XXXII, 325ff ; *ibid.*, 41ff).

- ⁵ *EI*, XXVIII, 302ff.
- ⁶ *EI*, XXXII, 229ff.
- ⁷ *IA*, I, p. 355.
- ⁸ *EI*, XXXIII, 275ff.
- ⁹ *JBORS*, II, pp. 419-27 ; *Orissa under the Bhauma Karas (OUBK)*, pp. 23-31.
- ¹⁰ *OUBK*, pp. 32-39.
- ¹¹ *OHRJ*, II, Nos. 3 and 4, p. 54.
- ¹² *JBORS*, XVI, pp. 69-83 ; *OUBK*, pp. 11-20.
- ¹³ *JBBORS*, XVI, p. 78.
- ¹⁴ *OHRJ*, I, No. 4, p. 269.
- ¹⁵ *EI*, XXVIII, 235ff.
- ¹⁶ *IA*, XIII, pp. 120-23.
- ¹⁷ *JBORS*, XVII, 1ff.
- ¹⁸ *JAHRS*, XI, 51 ff ; *EI*, XXVIII, pp. 205-211 (*Sat-trimsadavedanaka-rahitam nirup-adhikam*).
- ¹⁹ *EI*, XXXI, 259ff.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, XXVIII, p. 242.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, XXVIII, p. 251.
- ²² *Madala Panji*, edited by A. B. Mahanti, p. 31.
- ²³ For the different views on the Ganga era see *Historical Geography and Dynastic History of Orissa* (230ff).

NUMISMATIC SOURCES OF MEDIEVAL ORISSA

SMT. KUMUDINI ACHARYA

(*Orissa State Archives, Bhubaneswar*)

THE HISTORY of coinage of Orissa begins with the so-called Punchmarked coins discovered from different places like Sonepur in Bolangir, Baripada in Mayurbhanj, Sisupalgarh, Jharpara, Jagmara and Samantaraypur in Puri, Salipur in Cuttack, Asurgarh in Kalahandi and Chhatrapur in Ganjam.

A large number of Kushan and Puri Kushan coins have been discovered from different parts of Orissa. Scholars have designated the Puri Kushan coins as the Oriya Kushan coins. Though the coins are the imitations of Kushan coins they have been abundantly found from different parts of Orissa. Quite a large number of such type of Puri Kushan coins drew the attention of scholars and they concluded that such coins were used as the currency in the country for a certain period of time. Besides the Puri region they have been found in large numbers from Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Keonjhar and Sundargarh districts. Scholars like Vincent Smith¹ hold that they might have been issued by the rulers of Kalinga in the 4th or 5th century A.D. Sri P. Acharya² advocates that the so-called Puri Kushan coins represent the coinage of the kings of Orissa who flourished in the Gupta period and were quite independent of the Gupta emperors. Allan³ assigns the various hoards of these coins to the 3rd or early 4th century A.D. T. N. Ramchandran⁴ assigns them to the 4th century A.D. Dr. N. K. Sahu⁵ has upheld the view that these coins were struck by the Murunda kings who ruled in Orissa in the 3rd or 4th century A.D.

Some Gupta gold coins have been found in Orissa. It

is evident from Allahabad Pillar Inscription, Sumandala copperplate of Dharmaraja,⁶ Kanas copperplate inscription of Sri Lokavigraha,⁷ Ganjam copperplate inscription of Madhavaraja⁸ and other evidences that Orissa for a certain period was under the rule of Imperial Guptas. The presidential address of Dr. J. N. Banerjee at the Annual meeting of Numismatic Society of India held at Cuttack (Orissa) in the year 1949 reveals that gold coin of Kumar Gupta I⁹ was discovered from Angul subdivision of Dhenkanal District of Orissa. The coins of Chandragupta, Samudragupta and Kumaragupta are kept in the coin cabinet of Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar.

In the village Nanduru near Gandibedha in the district of Balasore was found a hoard of 147 copper coins of different size and weight. On the obverse of the coin there is couchant bull and on the reverse a legend of box-headed character which has been deciphered by Sri S. N. Rajguru¹⁰ as Sri Nandasya or Sunandasya ; the date assigned is the 5th or 6th century A.D.

Another hoard of 28 gold coins were found from the reserved forest area of Kodinga police station limits of Koraput district. They are all thin disclike gold coins. It has been examined by Sri S. N. Rajaguru.¹¹ Out of 28 coins 26 contain the name of Rajabhusana, and other two coins belong to Prapaganda Bhairava and Ranabhusana. The letters inscribed on the coins are in the old form of Telugu scripts of 11th or 12th century A.D. On every coin there is an emblem bearing either the figure of a sword or a Siva-lingam flanked by a few dotted marks. Each coin contains a record emblem at its centre. It is in each case the standing figure of a tiger which is the royal insignia of the Nagavamsi kings of Chakrakota. The two kings—Rajabhusana and Prapaganda Bhairava—are supposed to have belonged to the Nagavamsi kings of Chakrakota. Ranabhusana as stated by Sri Rajguru may be one of the Nagavamsi kings though his name is not found in the chronological table. But the emblem employed in his coin corresponds to those of the other coins of the hoard.

From various records it is learnt that the Nagavamsi kings of Chakrakota were very powerful and they were in power from circa 1023 to 1324 A.D. without yielding to any external power.

After them the Kakatiyas of Warangal possessed the kingdom towards the second half of the 14th century A.D.

Besides these coins we find other hoards from Orissa such as Kalachuri coins, Yadava coins, Gangeyadeva coins, etc., but they were not issued originally from Orissa by any king ruling over the area.

So far as medieval Orissa is concerned we get no recorded references to copper coins. It is suggested that metal coins were not used by common people. For ordinary transactions the cowries were the medium of exchange, though for large payments silver and gold were utilised. In the inscriptions of Sulki, Tunga and Somavamsi rulers of Orissa we come across the mention of the term *pala*.

In the Puri plate of Kulastambha¹² it is stated that a land was granted on rent payment basis with a fixed rent of ten *palas* of silver apparently per annum. Similarly in the Talcher copperplate grant of Gayada Tunga¹³ it is mentioned that the *trinodaka* or nominal rent per annum of a land was fixed at 4 *palas* of silver. The copperplate grant from Patna in the 6th regnal year of Mahavava Gupta Janmejaya¹⁴ mentions the annual rent of a village as 8 *palas* of silver.

Rupya was another type of currency prevalent in medieval Orissa. The Talcher copperplate grant of Kulastambha¹⁵ and Talcher plate of Gayada Tunga,¹⁶ Chicalole plates of Madhukamarnava¹⁷ and Ganjam plate of Prithivivarmadeva¹⁸ mention the circulation of Rupya. That Panini knew coined money is plainly borne out by his sutra V. 2, 119, *rupad ahata*..... where he says "word rupya is in the sense of 'Struck' (ahata) derived from *rupa* is the shape". With the taddhita affix *ya*, here implying possession, *rupya* would literally mean 'Struck' (money) having a form.¹⁹

Sarala Mahabharata written in the 15th century refers to *China*, *Mada*, *Pala*, *Kahana* and *Karsha*, Sarala Das in *Adya Parva* stated that Samvarana introduced *Pala*, *Mada* and *Karsha*.²⁰ *Niska* is another type of currency often mentioned in inscriptions. Ganga Mahadevi, queen of Narasimha III, gave 8 *Niskas* for reciting the grace of God.²¹ She also deposited 120

Ganda Niska in Simachalam temple treasury. In the time of Gajapati Kapilendra Deva also *Niska* was one of the currencies.²²

Other numismatic terms are also found such as *Mashak*, *Churni*, *Purano*, *Kahana*, *Pana*, *Gunja* or *Raktika*. But no definite coin of such type has yet been discovered.

The popular medium of exchange in medieval Orissa was cowrie. But the origin of the cowrie currency is still shrouded in mystery. In the Gajapati period references to the cowries are available. *Madala Panji* mentions that Kapilendra Deva gave 72,000 *Kahanas* of cowries to Jagannatha. Purushottama Deva gave 2,000 *Kahanas* of cowries as offerings for Jagannatha service. Cowrie was widely prevalent in India up to Muslim conquest. In the accounts of Hiuen-Tsang and *Ain-i-Akbari* there are references to cowries. The Hindol plate of Subhakar Deva III of Bhaumakara dynasty also mentions the cowrie as a currency.²³

The *fanams* of the Ganga period are abundant in Orissa. They have been discovered from various places in different districts. From the inscriptional records various types of *Mada* coins with different names can be found. They are mentioned as *Mada*, *Ganda Mada*, *Malla Mada*, *Malla Nandi Mada*, *Matsya Mada*, *Suravi Mada*, *Ganga Mada*, *Chiruganda Mada*, *Padmanidhi Ganda Mada*, *Kulotungo Mada*, etc. Apart from the names of the *Madas*, *Chinams*, *Fanams*, *Matsya Gadyas*, *Nibadhas*, gold *Tankas*, silver *Tankas*, *Sasukani Tankas* are other names of the coins found in the inscriptions. Most of the names are found in south Indian inscriptions. Although the weight of a *Mada* has been determined as 40 Ratis or half Tola the present findings of Ganga *fanams* do not correspond to these weights. So scholars are of opinion that there Ganga *fanams* were introduced as temple offerings. However it is surprising that though coins meant for temple offerings are available in abundance in various parts of Orissa, no traces of stamped *Mada* coins mentioned in different inscriptions are available. It may be suggested that *Mada* was not a stamped coin but a weight standard only.

The Ganga *fanams* do not constitute a new discovery in the field of Orissan numismatics. But they are not included in

currency. They were used for religious purposes as offerings to gods and Brahmins.

In the period of Gangas very rare references are found regarding silver coins. Inscriptions of Narasimha IV in Lakshmi Narasimha temple at Simhachalam²⁴ and another inscription of Narasimha IV²⁵ refer to a currency called the Sasukani Tankas.

According to Cunningham, Tanka²⁶ at first was a simple weight, and after a stamp was added, it became the name of a coin. The standard weight of Tanka fluctuated and varied from time to time. Though the inscriptional evidences are available of the use of Tankas in the period of Purushottama Deva, Mukunda Deva, etc., exact specimens are lacking.

The Muslims, specially Sher Shah, re-organised the silver coinages and the Mughals followed his system.²⁷ Coins of the Mughal emperors have received the greatest attention of the Indian numismatists. It may be partly due to the abundance in which they are found and partly due to the easy identification they offered.

The coins of Shahjahan, Aurangzeb, Mahammad Shah, Ahmad Shah of Cuttack mint (Orissa) have been published by H. N. Write.²⁸ There were mints at Cuttack and Hariharpur.²⁹ Though the coins of Humayun, Akbar, Shahjahan, Aurangzeb, Islam Shah, Mahammad Adil Shah, Firoz Shah, Sultan Razia, Allaudin Massud Shah, Miazuddin Beherain Shah, Mahammad bin Sinkandar bin Lodi, Kutubuddin Mobarakh, Mahammad Tughluk, Ahmad Shah, Shah Alam and others are preserved in the coin cabinet of Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar, but the details of their provenance are not known.

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⁴ *J.A.H.R.S.*

⁵ *History of Orissa*, p. 422, N. K. Sahu.

- ⁶ *O.H.R.J.*, Vol. I.
- ⁷ *J.K.H.R.S.*, Vol. III.
- ⁸ *E.I.*, Vol. VI.
- ⁹ *J.N.S.I.*, Vol. XI, part I, p. 72.
- ¹⁰ *O.H.R.J.*, Vol. V, pp. 157-159.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, part I, pp. 77 to 82.
- ¹² *E.I.*, Vol. XXXII, p. 169, line 31.
- ¹³ *E.I.*, Vol. XXIX, p. 100, lines 32-33.
- ¹⁴ *E.I.*, Vol. XXI, p. 342, lines 19-20.
- ¹⁵ *E.I.*, XXII, p. 158, line 28.
- ¹⁶ *J.A.S.B.*, Vol. XII, p. 294.
- ¹⁷ *I.O.*, Vol. II, p. 177.
- ¹⁸ *I.O.*, Vol. II, p. 276.
- ¹⁹ *N.O.*, Vol. I, p. 39, foot-note, E. Thomas.
- ²⁰ *Sarala Mahabharata* (Adya Parva), p. 45.
- ²¹ *History of Orissa*, Mahtab.
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ *Orissa under the Bhauma Kings*, p. 92, B. Mishra.
- ²⁴ *I.O.*, Vol. V, part III, p. 913.
S.I.I., Vol. VI, No. 946.
- ²⁵ *S.I.I.*, Vol. VI, No. 919.
- ²⁶ *Coins of Ancient India*, p. 23, Cunningham.
- ²⁷ *N.S.*, Vol. XLVII, F. N. 19.
- ²⁸ *C.C.I.M.C.*, Vol. III, part I.
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ABBREVIATIONS

1. *O.H.R.J.*—Orissa Historical Research Journal.
2. *J.K.H.R.S.*—Journal of the Kalinga Historical Research Society.
3. *E.I.*—*Epigraphia Indica*
4. *J.N.S.I.*—Journal of the Numismatic Society of India.
5. *I.O.*—Inscriptions of Orissa.
6. *S.I.I.*—South Indian Inscriptions.
7. *C.C.I.M.C.*—Catalogue of coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.
8. *Catalogue of Indian Coins.*

SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF ORISSA : MEDIEVAL AND MODERN PERIODS

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DURING the early part of the tenth century Orissa saw the decline of the Kara or the Bhauma-Kara dynasty. It is believed that they rose and fell between c. 736 and c. 940 A.D. The Bhauma Karas were powerful rulers. They had donated many grants to temples and religious institutions. The copperplates found at Neulpur, Terundia, Chaurasi, Jindol, Baud, Talcher, Dhenkanal, Santiragram, Angur, Tala Tali, Kumargan, Dhara-kote and other places give us information about this dynasty. Besides the copperplates, there are inscriptions relating to this dynasty. Notable among them are the inscriptions found in the temple of Ramsevara, Ganesh Gumpha, Dhauli cave inscriptions, Angul inscriptions and Khandagiri inscriptions. This dynasty fell down during the middle of the tenth century. The last four rulers of the dynasty were women and the last ruler was Dharma Mahadevi. The queen had issued two important charters and they offer us a good deal of information about the dynasty. The charters of Angul and Tala Tali, though not dated, certainly make positive contribution to this part of Orissan history.

The Sulkis ruled Orissa for a brief period. They had their domain in the neighbourhood of Dhenkanal and Talcher. They were contemporaries of the Bhauma-Kara. The following are important sources of information about the Sulkis—The Dhenkanal Grant of Jayasthambha Deva, the Dhenkanal Grant of Ranasthambha, the Hindol Copperplate of Ranasthambha, the Puri Copperplate of Ranasthambha, the Dhenkanal Copperplate

of Kulasthambha, and the Talcher Copperplate of Kulasthambha. The Sulkis had introduced a special type of currency and this has also served as a source of historical information. The Jara-gram grant has added a lot of information about the Sulkis.

The Soma dynasty occupies a prominent place in the history of medieval Orissa. They were originally known as Panduvamsi rulers. Their history covers the period from the 7th century A.D. to the 12th century A.D. Their original capital was a Siripur which has been identified with the present village of Siripur, a small village on the banks of Mahanadi in the Madhya Pradesh. There were many old temples in this village. The Lakshmana temple indicates the high level of art and culture the Soma rulers had attained. The temple is made of fine bricks and a few stone inscriptions have been found from the ruins of this temple. One of the stone inscriptions belonging to the period of Mahasivagupta gives information about the Soma dynasty.

A number of copperplates and stone inscriptions about the Soma dynasty have been discovered in Orissa. From the historical evidence we have, it is presumed that the Soma dynasty was also known as the Kesari dynasty. There is difference of opinion regarding the relationship between the Bhauma-Karas and the rulers of the Soma dynasty. The Bhauma-Karas were Buddhists and the Soma Dynasty rulers were Baisnabas. However, the Bhauma-Karas were very liberal in their religious attitude and they had built a number of Shiva temples also. At a time, the Buddhists adopted Tantra and Vajrayana became very popular with the Buddhists. The Saivas were attracted towards Tantra and this became the common meeting ground for both the Buddhists and the Saivas. Because of this common meeting place, there is a lot of information about both the dynasties in Buddhist and Hindu historical remains.

The rulers of the Soma dynasty had left a number of copperplates. Mahabhava Gupta Janamejaya's copperplates have been found at Sonapur, Bakra Tentuli, Patna, Kalibhara, several copperplates in Cuttack district and a few in the Central Province. These copperplates are mostly donation certificates issued in favour of religious institutions and service-holders. He is the

author of the Kiserakella Charter and this was issued in the 11th year of his rule. Kiserakella has been located at a distance of six miles from the modern town of Balangir. Mahabhava Gupta also issued an interesting charter from the battlefield of Bakra-tentuli. He recorded his battle with Ranabhanjadev who was a ruler of the Khinjali Mandola. The copperplate charter known as the second Kalibhana grant describes this ruler as a large-hearted and valiant prince. There is detailed description of his administration, conquests, achievements and the court. More information about him is available in the inscriptions of the Brahmeswar temple of Kalavatidevi.

The inscriptions in the Brahmeswar temple give us some information regarding Bhimararha Mahabhava Gupta II. The Narasinghpur Charter has described this ruler in glorious terms. There are two copperplates which record the grants made by this king. Another ruler of the Soma dynasty was Dharmarath Mahasiva Gupta II. There is an inscription in the Brahmeswar temple regarding him. The Narasinghpur Charter also refers about him. Incidentally, both, the Brahmeswar temple inscription and the Narasinghpur Charter refer about Jajati II. Jajati had married the daughter of the king of Orissa and as the king had no male heir, the son-in-law became the king of Orissa. He held the title of Kesari.

Jajati Kesari had made great contributions to Orissan history. The historical remains of Jajpur speak about him. He began the construction of the Lingaraj temple of Bhubaneswar. There is another temple in Keonjhar known as Kusaleswar which was built by him. Various temples constructed during this period form the main source of information about Jajati Kesari.

Udyoti Kesari was another important ruler of the Kesari dynasty. He ruled from 1040 A.D. to 1065 A.D. The charter of Karnadeva speaks very high of him. There is reference about him in the inscriptions of the Navamuni caves. There are references about him in the Lalatendu Kesari caves also. The Sonepur plate of Kumara Someswar Deva issued from Suvarnapura notes that Udyoti Kesari granted Losola to Abhimantu. Another important source of information about him is the inscriptions of the Brahmeswar temple.

There are several copperplate grants of this period. They show the formation of the Oriya language. There are several stone inscriptions of this period. Dr. K. C. Panigrahi had studied these stone inscriptions. The inscriptions refer to donations and grants made by rulers of this dynasty. The Korni copperplate speaks of the decline of the dynasty. It refers to Chodoganga Deva who must have occupied Orissa prior to 1112 A.D.

The Chindika Nagas had dominated in the Bastar region for some time. It is difficult to ascertain the reasons for the coming of the Chindika Nagas from their original home in Kanada region. There are a few inscriptions and copperplates about them. There have been a few stone inscriptions in the Bastar area. There is a fragmentary inscription about them found from Errakot which is about ten miles from Jagdalpur. It is believed that these Chindika Nagas might have come to this area along with Rajendra Chola. However, the Tirumalal inscriptions which have given detailed information about Rajendra Chola have no reference about the emigrants of the Chindika Nagas. The Mahakosala Historical Society Plates have reference about them and it is inferred that the Somavamsi rulers used to help the Chindika Nagas from time to time. Another important source of information about the Chindika Nagas is the historical work named *Navasahasanka Charita* written by Padmagupta who was also known as Parimala. He was the court-poet of Sindhuraja Navasahasanka of Malwa who flourished about 1000 A.D. The Kuruspal inscription is a helpful source on the history of Chindika Nagas.

The Telugu-Chodas ruled in the western parts of Orissa for some time. There are some copperplate grants issued from Suvarnapur by them. They are known as Kumarisimha plates, the Patna Museum plates and the Mahada copperplates. These plates have given much information about the administration and achievements of the Telugu-Chodas.

A major change came in the political history of Orissa with the rise of the Imperial Gangas. From the 5th century A.D.

to the coming of Vajra Hasta V is a period known as the period of the Eastern Gangas. It was with Vajra Hasta V, they attained imperial status and continued from 1070 A.D. to 1435 A.D. Seven copperplate charters were issued by Vajra Hasta V. They describe the administration and career of this ruler. The inscriptions available in the Mukhalingam temple tell us more about Vajra Hasta V. He was succeeded by Raj Raj Deva I. The Dirghasi inscription of 1079 A.D. speaks about his military achievements. Special reference has been made about Vanapati who was the commander of Raj Raj Deva.

Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva ruled from 1077 A.D. to 1147 A.D. There is an important Tamil poem which gives some information about him. It is known as *Kalingattupparani* composed by Jayanigondam who was the court-poet of Kulottunga. The Kornī copperplate inscription of 1112 A.D. refers about a war this king fought. There are several stone inscriptions found at Sreekurman, Draksharama and other places regarding him. In these inscriptions, several queens are attached with his name. The names of the queens are Kasturikamodini, Indira, Chandralekha, Lakshmidevi, Pruthivimaha Devi, Rajula Devi, Padmala Devi, Pattamaha Devi, Satya Devi, Lilabati Devi, Kalayana Devi, Venavamha Devi, Jayagondon, Lavanyavati Devi and Somolamaha Devi. The Kenduli plate refers to one of his sons whose name was Raghava. This plate also refers about his literary achievements.

The copperplates found at Kendupatna, Asanakhali, Panjabi Matha and Sankarananada Matha reveal that Chodaganga Deva fought several battles and won them with great glory. There is reference about a battle fought in the city of Armeya which was the capital of Mandara. This place has been identified with a place named Bhitarayada at a distance of eight miles from Arambagh in the district of Hooghly, West Bengal. A copperplate of Vijayadeva speaks about a navy of south Bengal. This navy was one of the possible reasons for which Chodaganga could not penetrate into the interior of Bengal. A copperplate inscription referring to Vijayasena of Bengal speaks of the defeat of Chodaganga by Vijayasena.

The inscriptions found in the Lingaraj temple of Bhubane-

swar informs us that Chodaganga conquered Utkal by the 12th century A.D. However, he did not directly control the administration, he had left it in the hands of the Kesari kings. This is verified from a stone inscription found in the temple of Chandrakesari, in the Kapilas hills of the Dhenkanal district.

There are several temple inscriptions in Sreekuram, Simanchalam, Mukhalingam and also in the Jagannath temple at Puri referring to the career and achievements of Chodaganga. The Govindpur inscriptions and the Lakshmandev records of Nagpur corroborate the temple inscriptions of Puri. Besides the previously mentioned copperplates, there several other copperplates which reveal about Chodaganaga. Special mention may be made about the Viziagpattam copperplates, the Murupaka copperplate and the Seldah copperplate. There are several stone inscriptions like those of Viziagpattam, Ronanaki Stone inscription, Nilakantha Deva stone inscriptions, Draksyaram Temple inscription and Mukhalingam stone inscription about Chodaganga and the Ganga rulers.

The stone inscriptions of the Megheswar temple of Bhubaneswar was built by Aniyankbhima who ruled from 1190 to 1198 A.D. This is an interesting inscription for several reasons. It has referred about the offerings of the king to Siva. He offered beautiful damsels (Devadasis) like the fairies of heaven who had sweet lips, whose eyes were enchanting and who had beautiful curves. This would indicate the style of life and culture during the Ganga period in Orissa. The inscriptions of Sobheneswar and Megheswar temples indicate the interest the king had taken for the public interest. The king built high walls, good roads and dug tanks and canals for irrigation. This king, Anangabhima Deva laid good roads also. The Kendulu copperplates refer about this king as a scholar and lover of learning. There are references about his queens in several copperplates issued during his time.

There are a number of copperplates ascribed to Anangabhima Deva III who ruled from 1211 to 1238 A.D. The Nagari copperplate is the most important copperplate of this king.

There is a stone inscription in the Chhateswar temple in Cuttack district in which reference is made about him. This temple was built in 1220 A.D. This inscription records the fight of the king with the Muslims. The *Madala Panji* also agrees with the events recorded in this inscription. The *Madala Panji* states that Anangabhima Deva built the famous fort of Barabati at Cuttack. It may be mentioned that later historical records have stated that Mukunda Deva built the fort. It is possible that Anangabhima Deva might have built the fort but it might have been rebuilt by Mukunda Deva. Besides this inscription, there are other inscriptions of Anangabhima Deva in the Lingaraj temple at Bhubaneswar, the Pataleswar temple and the Jagannatha temple.

Narasimha Deva ruled for a long period of twenty-four years, i.e., 1328 to 1352 A.D. There are several copperplates of Narasimha Deva II, Bhanudeva II and Narasimha Deva IV which speak about Narasimha Deva. The *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* also refers about his regime. The writer of this work, the Muslim historian Minhaj-us-Shiraj has recorded that Narasimha defeated the Muslims at Katasin in 1243 A.D.

The *Ekavali* is a literary work on rhetoric by Vidyadhara, a court-poet of Narasimha Deva I. It gives a lot of information about the ruler. He was a great patron of scholarship, a benevolent king, a great conqueror, a mighty builder and a famous hero. This work also refers to his victories over the Muslim rulers and those of Bengal.

There are many temple inscriptions about Bhanudeva I who ruled from 1264 to 1278 A.D. Notable among them are the Amareswar temple inscription, the Ananta Vasudeva temple inscription, the Parvati temple inscription, the Bhimeswar temple inscription, the Sreekakuram temple inscription, the Simanchala temple inscription and the Sonepur inscription.

There are several references about a scholar whose name was Narahari Tirtha. He had a student whose name was Jagannath Tirtha. Narahari Tirtha was the author of several books. The notable among them were *Sukrabhasyatika*, *Narahari Tirtha and Commentary on the Upanishads*. There are references

about Narahari Tirtha in the *Karnatak Kavi Charita*, *Madhavabijayakavya* and *Narahariyati Stotram*.

There are three important copperplates about Narasimha II. They are the Allapur copperplates, the Ashanakhalli copperplates and the three Kendupatna copperplates. The Puri copperplate relates to Bhanudeva II who ruled from 1306 to 1328 A.D. There is an inscription in the Sankarananda Matha of Puri. This is about Narasimha Deva IV and his donations to Brahmins. Another inscription of the same king is found on a stone pillar of the Siddheswar temple in the village of Siddheswar near Jaipur on the banks of Baitarani. These inscriptions give us a clear picture of the administration of the ruler and an insight into the social and cultural life of the period.

The Suryavamsi Gajapatis succeeded after the downfall of the Gangas in the power politics of Orissa. They claimed to have descended from the Sun God. They were known as the Gajapatis—the lords over elephants. The founder of this dynasty was Kapilendradeva who ruled from 1435 A.D. to 1468, A.D. The *Gangavamsa-charita* written by Basudev Rath describes the way in which Kapilendradeva came to Orissa. There is an inscription in the Simanchala temple which says that Bhanudeva was engaged in a war in the south and this was an opportunity for Kapilendradeva to stage a coup and occupy the throne of Orissa. Till now, the local legends used to describe Kapilendradeva as a cow-boy, a thief or a beggar who was adopted by the last Ganga ruler Matta-Bhanudeva. Present epigraphical studies do not agree with this and it is believed that Kapilendradeva's father was a local feudatory chief and his name was Jageswar. This is an important contribution in the study of the Suryavamsi Gajapati rulers of Orissa. They ruled for one hundred and five years.

There are more than forty inscriptions of Kapilendradeva. They are written in Oriya, Sanskrit and Telugu. They have been found in a widely scattered area. Inscriptions of Kapilendradeva have been found at Puri, Bhubaneswar, Simanchalam, Sreekuram, Sreekakulam, Mukhlingam, Chintapallipadu in

Guntur district, Chaveli in Krishna district, Veligalani in Guntur district, Pedapuram in East Godavari district, Warnagal, Srisailem, Chitrakota in Vishakapatnam district, Munnur in Arcot district, Jakkampudi in Krishna district, Udayalavada in Kurnool district and Gopinathpur in Cuttack district. It is interesting that his inscriptions have been found as far as in Arcot district and were written in Tamil. The Jagannatha temple of Puri contains the earliest inscription of Kapilendra-deva. The inscriptions of Kapilendradeva offer us a detailed study about his contributions.

There are equally a large number of inscriptions about Purusottamadeva as they were about his father, Kapilendradeva. The inscriptions are found in Puri, Simanchalam, Sreekurum, Santaravaru in Bapatla district, Draksharama in East Godavari district, Poatavaram in Guntur district, Mutukapali, Kondavidu and several places in Orissa. They are written in Oriya, Sanskrit and Telugu. These inscriptions describe the conditions of the period and the happenings in the surrounding kingdoms. Purusottamadeva had to fight against the South Indian ruler Saluva Narasimha. Many South Indian inscriptions of Saluva Narasimha have reference about Purusottamadeva.

There is a story in Orissa that Purusottamadeva married a daughter of Saluva Narasimha. Her name has been mentioned as Padmavati and the story is connected with Jagannatha and Bala-bhadra of Puri temple. There is wide difference in this story. The *Madala Panji* names the queen as Padmini and R. D. Banerjee identifies the heroine as Rupambika, the mother of Prataparudra. Dr. K. C. Panigrahi opines that the story is based on the Surekha Harana of *Sarala Mahabharata*. Dr. N. K. Sahu and others describe this as fantastic because *Sarala Mahabharata* was written during the time of Kapilendra Deva. They doubt that there was ever a fight for a girl named Padmavati. Dr. G. N. Das is of the same view and he denies that there was ever a kingdom named Kanchi so close to Orissa where Purusottamadeva could have gone and fought. Certainly Jagannatha and Bala-bhadra could have never gone to fight for a king. It is probable that Purusottama created a story to win the confidence of the people. This was the second time he claimed the blessings

of the gods, the first time was when he claimed the throne and side-tracking the claims of the elder brother Hambira. Later historians had accepted the Kanchi-Kaveri episode as if it was a part of history. It was never.

Prataparudra was another celebrated ruler of the dynasty. His career was punctuated by his contact and conflict with three important persons of the period. He was supposed to have been religiously influenced by Sri Chaitanya. Contemporary Vaisnavite books of the period have referred to this influence. *Chaitanya Charitamrita*, *Chaitanyamangala* of Jayananda and *Chaitanya Bhagavata* are important literary sources relating to the association of Prataparudra with Sri Chaitanya. There are some like Dr. N. K. Sahu who refuse to admit any major influence of the saint over the king. However, there are majority of Oriya and Bengalee scholars who agree that a martial race like the Oriyas were ruined by the weak and ill-balanced religious influence of Sri Chaitanya. The Gajapatis were brought down to their knee by this change of event.

Information regarding to Prataparudra is available in the context of two other rulers. They are Krishnadeva Raya of Vijayanagara kingdom and Hussain Shah who was the ruler of Bengal. The Guidimelapadu plates of January, 1512 record Prataparudra's gift made in the Nellore district. It is possible, the conflict between Krishnadeva Raya and Prataparudra began after this date.

The literary work *Rayavachakamu* has mentioned a tragedy in the family life of Prataparudra. Her daughter had married Krishnadeva Raya. She was not loved by her husband. She tried to poison her husband and lost in the battle. Her brother Virabhadra was liked for sometime by the Krishnadeva Raya and was appointed as a governor in a border area. It was curious that though Krishnadeva Raya was fighting with the father, he had liked the son. After some time he changed his mind and tried to insult him in a public court. He asked Virabhadra to fence with one of his ordinary soldiers. Virabhadra felt insulted and committed suicide. There is no information in Orissa about these two events and they are claimed by Telugu sources only.

The Bhoi dynasty ruled Orissa for a brief period. Govinda

Vidyadhar was the founder of this dynasty. He has left five inscriptions in the Simanchala temple. The *Madala Panji* is another source of information about him and his dynasty. The Bhoi dynasty was followed by Mukundadeva of the Chalukya dynasty. The Muslim and Mughal records and chronicles of the period refer about him and his administration. The *Ain-i-Akbari* and the various travel accounts of the Europeans have also referred about him and his fort at Barabati. There were some inscriptions in the Barabati fort. Mukundadeva has been referred as 'Vira Sri Gajapati Gaudesvara Navakoti Karnata Kalevaresvara Sri Vira Mukunda Gajapati Maharaja'.

After the death of Mukundadeva, there was a prolonged struggle for power between the Afghans and the Mughals in Orissa. Ramachandra Deva had been recognised as the king of Khurda by Todor Malla who was the Deputy of Akbar in Orissa. Qutlu Khan an Afghan chief, united the Afghans in Orissa and defeated Ramachandra Deva. Akbar was unhappy and he sent his general Mansingh. In a battle led by Jagatsingh, Mansingh's son, the Mughals had lost. But fortunately, Qutlu Khan suddenly died and this paved the way for the victory of the Mughals. Almost all the contemporary records of the time record these events. The *Madala Panji* also has recorded the fight of the Afghans and Mughals for power in this province. Up to the death of Aurangzeb Orissa had a disturbed period. So much so the temple of Jagannatha was closed till 1707 when Aurangzeb died.

After the decline of the Mughals, Orissa passed under the control of the Nazims of Bengal. The *Madala Panji* narrates that Ramachandra Deva II fell in love with the daughter of the Muslim ruler and married her. Though this is asserted by the *Madala Panji* there are no other sources speaking anything about the love or marriage of Ramachandra II with the Muslim princess.

Orissa passed into the hands of the Marathas on 19th April, 1742. Bhaskar Pundit, accompanied by Mir Habib, entered Orissa through the Barmal Pass and occupied the Barabati Fort. The Subedars remained at Cuttack and were in charge of

both civil and judiciary administration. The records of Nagpur Court constitute an important source of information about the Maratha administration in Orissa. During the Maratha period in Orissa, a number of literary contributions were possible. *Samara Taranga* of Kavi Brajanath Bodojena is a narration of the Maratha attack on Dhenkanal. It is a faithful description of the battle between the two sides. Besides Brajanath Bodojena, there were many other writers and translators who have sincerely contributed to the field of literature. Thus they have given us an important source for history. They are Krishna Singh, Kabi Gopal, Jaya Singh, Madhusudan Jagdev, Balabhadra Madraraj, Dinabandhu Khandenaga and Kesab Patnaik. The period of the Marathas was a peaceful period when compared to the periods under the Afghans and the Mughals. Though, on this particular point, there is a great deal of difference of opinion, one can safely say that at least in the field of literature, the peace was more felt than in the field of administration and politics. That is the reason why the Maratha period has contributed more to the field of creative and historical literature.

The Marathas were good administrators. They used to maintain accounts and detailed information about the law and order problems. The Records available now at Nagpur and London form a very valuable source of information about the Marathas in Orissa. The Marathas were ousted from Barabati in 1803. Till then, they had successfully held the reins of administration in Orissa though their main headquarters remained at a very long distance in Nagpur.

The British occupied Orissa in 1803. That was under the East India Company. By this time, the British had almost perfected their system of administration in India. The crucial period had passed and there was no anxiety or sense of danger. They had fought the Battle of Plassey in 1757 and since then, they had consolidated their possessions in this country. By the time, they came to Orissa, there was not much problem from the other European powers. However, there were a few pockets possessed by the French in Orissa. There was a small fort at Ganjam now in southern Orissa, and this had been taken by the

British in 1767. In northern Orissa, there were a few small pockets in Balasore district. They were so small that they made no problem at all.

The administrative records were kept in a detailed manner. There are records classified as revenue records, police records, salt records, judiciary records and other records from year to year. The Orissa State Museum at Bhubaneswar, the West Bengal Archives at Calcutta, the National Museum at New Delhi and the British Museum keep such historical records. They form the most important source of history of the British period.

A number of Commissions had been set up by the East India Company and later by the Crown regarding different problems faced in the province from time to time. The findings of the Paik rebellion in Khurda, the question of abolishing the post of the Gomasta, various proposals for bringing about social reforms, etc. do form an important source of history for modern Orissa. Reports on the Meriha, child infanticide, Goti, bonded labour and other social problems constituted a bundle of negative forces in the early period of the British administration. There was no definite historical records about them and it was a fantastic task for the British administrators to find out solution for these problems.

Regarding the Government records and reports, there is a good collection of them. Letters to and from the Court of Directors, Proceedings of Board of Customs, Salt and Opium Customs Proceedings, Bengal Revenue Proceedings, Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, Correspondence on the Jagannatha Temple, the Famine Commission Report, Report on Inland Navigation and Communication, the various reports for extending land settlement, the Madox Report which came by the end of the nineteenth century, the Khurda Selections and hundreds of other reports are valuable for a scholar working on the modern period of Orissan history.

Besides the Government Reports, during this period, a number of writers came forward and have contributed immensely. The Missionaries who came to Orissa from the main headquarters at Sreerampur did a great deal of service for Orissa. They printed the first book in Oriya. They defended the Oriya

language and enabled it to continue in Orissa. Subsequently writers like Gangadhar Mehera, Nandakishore Bala, Radhanath Ray, Chintamana Mohanty, Pyarisankar Ray and a host of others wrote in Oriya and reflected the life and culture of the Oriya people.

The role of Fakirmohan Senapati was most prominent. He had the opportunity to move in different parts of the Province. He came in touch with the common man and the feudal chiefs. It was possible for him to reflect the hope and aspirations and make his writings a part of modern history of the Oriya people. His autobiography was a pioneering work and it paved a new way. He was followed by a number of brilliant Oriya writers who were successful in enriching the modern history of Orissa and the Oriyas.

SOURCES OF ORISSA HISTORY (1568—1803)

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IN 1568 Prince Bayazid, the General of Sulaiman Khan Kararani, the Afghan ruler of Bengal and Bihar conquered Puri, Cuttack and Balasore, three prosperous provinces of Orissa. By 1572 Sulaiman acknowledged the suzerainty of Akbar, the Great Mughal, over Orissa. The Mughal rule continued in Orissa till 1751 when Alivardi Khan, the Nawab of Bengal Suba ceded the revenue of Orissa to Raghuji Bhonsle I of Nagpur. In 1803 the Company's government in Bengal conquered the three districts of Orissa, known as Mughalbandi (ruled by the Mughals) region. But a vast territory ruled by the native feudatory chiefs of Orissa stretching from Ganjam on the south-east and Chhattisgarh division of western Orissa, known as the Garhjat or Killajat (fortified by forts) region throughout this period (1568-1803) virtually enjoyed political independence subject to the payment of 'peskush' (acknowledgement revenue) to the Mughal and later on to the Bhonsle sovereigns. Since 1568, Orissa as a province ruled by the naib-nazims under Bengal subedars, could not escape from being influenced by the political and economic developments of Bengal. Thus historical treatises of medieval India and particularly of Suba Bengal, the Persian chronicles may be considered to be the basic sources of political history of the then Orissa.

Orissa was virtually a 'terra incognita' to the historians of the nineteenth century. The British military commanders and civil servants were the first to write history of Orissa. Andrew Stirling an efficient administrator, published his book, *An Account of Orissa or Cuttack Proper* in 1846. He was followed by John

Beames in 1861, W. W. Hunter in 1872 and George Toynbee in 1873, all civilian scholars of the mid-nineteenth-century Orissa. John Beames' work dealt with his experience in Orissa and Toynbee's book covered the John Company's administration in Orissa from 1803 to 1823. Only Sir William Wilson Hunter made a systematic attempt to write the history of Orissa from ancient times to 1872. All the civilian historians for administrative reasons traced the genesis and development of political and economic institutions of Orissa from the Muslim period since the sixteenth century. But pioneers in the field of historical scholarship of Orissa as they were, they had to depend on historical tradition and anecdotes for writing history of Orissa. They engaged 'pundits' (scholars) to translate Sanskrit and Oriya treatises. Unfamiliar with scientific methodology of research, they had the aim to bring out the historical records of Orissa for the use of future generation of British administrators to make them conversant with the politico-economic institutions of the land they would rule. Their writings suffer from white man's superiority complex but nevertheless form the basic literature on the historiography of medieval Orissa. Some military commanders like Captain S. C. Macpherson in 1842 and Major Campbell in 1864, left accounts of their military operations in the Khond lands of western Garhjat, Orissa. As a secondary object they described socio-economic condition of the people they conquered, revealing the society and customs of the aboriginal tribes as descended from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. Some Christian Missionaries like J. J. Peggs and W. F. B. Laurie had written their historical treatises attacking traditional socio-religious institutions of Orissa. As their works revolved round preaching and distributing sacred Christian pamphlets to civilise the people, their works threw light on the more or less unchanged socio-religious life of the people during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

I

The primary sources of history for the Mughal rule in Orissa may be classified into four broad categories : (1) Persian chronicles covering the political events, military campaigns of the Mughal rulers and the Bengal subedars. They contain stray references to military conquests of Orissa by the nawabs of Bengal. (2) The Factory Records at Orissa, preserved in the India Office Library and printed by Lt. Foster & C. Fawcett in multi-volume editions, give a graphic picture of the economic condition of the then Orissa. The Dutch Records and the Accounts of travellers like Bowrey, Streynsham Master published in the Hakluyt Series also contain stray references to trade relation of the Company with the naib-nazims of Orissa. (3) The British correspondence of the nineteenth century, particularly correspondence between Cuttack administrators and the Calcutta authorities in revenue and administrative matters and between the Home Government at London and Calcutta contain many references of the Mughal period prior to 1751 when the Bhonsle rulers became the revenue collectors of Orissa. The reports presented in the Parliament may also come within this category. (4) In the last category the contemporary literary sources and the private records preserved in the Orissa archives and some stray papers preserved by the erstwhile feudatory chiefs of Orissa like those of Mayurbhanj, Bamanda and Khariar would be included.

Of the Persian sources the *Ain-i-Akbari* of Abul Fazl, translated by H. Blochmann and H. S. Jarrett (3 Vols., 1873-1894) would get preference for its administrative details concerning Mughalbandi region of Orissa. One can also mention Abul Fazl's *Akbarnamah*, Vols. 1-3, edited by H. Beveridge (Calcutta, 1939), Abdul Qadir Badaoni's *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* (ed. by Lt.-Col. Ranking and W. H. Lowe, Calcutta, 1873), *Tabaquat-i-Akbari* by Khaja Nijam-Uddin-Ahmed (ed. by H. M. Elliot and J. Dowson, Calcutta, 1869) and Khafi Khan's *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab* (ed. by Elliot and Dowson) as sources of history for the medieval Orissa. Two more printed books, Ghulam Husain Salim's *Riyaz-us-Salatin* (tr. by Maulavi Abdus Salam,

Calcutta, 1904) and *Seir Mutakherin* by Ghulam Hussain Tabatabai or *A View of Modern Times* (1707-1780), reprinted by R. Cambray & Co. (Calcutta, 1904) give a graphic picture of the declining days of the Mughal rule in Orissa. Sir Jadunath Sarkar had extensively quoted some Persian manuscripts like *Muraqat-i-Hassan* or *Letters of Maulana Abul Hassan* and Inayet Ullah's *Ahkham-i-Alamgeri* (Rampur Ms. No. 219 b) in *Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Vol. 2, Parts I and II, while Noman Ahmad Siddiqi had quoted from the manuscripts of *Khulasat-i-Siyaq*, *Farhang-i-Kardani*, *Dastur-ul-Amul-i-Bikas* and *Hidayat-ul-Qawaid* from the Khudabaksh Library, Patna and Aligarh Muslim University Library. The English translation of *Calendar of Persian Correspondence* published from National Archives, Delhi in eleven volumes, starts from 1759 but from these volumes stray references about the political and economic history of Orissa of the early eighteenth century could be collected. All these Persian treatises had scrappy information concerning military and administrative activities in Orissa during the Mughal period. A systematic narration of events in Orissa beyond the Mughalbandi region could not be found out. Some of the Garhjat rulers in the nineteenth century and early part of twentieth century like the Rajas (kings) of Mayurbhanj, Kalahandi, Bamanda and Khariar engaged some oriental scholars for eulogising the military activities of their forefathers in the shape of dynastic history. Parmananda Acharya, late Superintendent of Orissa Museum, wrote many scholarly articles about Mayurbhanj and Orissa in general in the *Journals of Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, *Journals of Asiatic Society of Bengal* and *Orissa Historical Research Journals* have published some land-grants and archaeological evidences of Orissa during the period gleaned from the Persian sources.

The second category of sources would include the *Factory Records*. The British Factories at Masulipatam (1611) and Surat (1612) preceded those constructed at Hariharpur (May, 1633), Balasore (June, 1633) and subsequently at Pipli (1636). The destruction of Portuguese settlement of Hughli in 1632 and widespread Gujarat famine of 1631-32 necessiated the opening

up of new markets in Orissa where the Dutch Company had already a privileged position. But the British advent at Balasore synchronised with the virtual withdrawal of the Dutch traders from Orissa. Thus Factory Records, accounts of the European voyagers and merchants constituted the principal source of economic history of the then Orissa. The printed documentary sources of the Factory Records could be found out from the following sources: (1) *The English Factory Records in India* (1618-1669) edited by W. Foster, published from Oxford between 1906 and 1927 in 13 volumes, (2) *The English Factories in India, New Series* took up the period between 1670-1677 was edited by C. Fawcett in two volumes from Oxford between 1936-1952, (3) In the Indian Records Series: *The Diaries of Streyنشam Master* was published from London, 1911 in 2 volumes, (4) The following books of the Hakluyt Series are mainly important for the commercial history of Orissa which include William Bruton's *News from the East Indies or A Voyage to Bengalla* (London, 1638) published in Hakluyt's collection of *Early Voyages and Travels and Discoveries*, Vol. V (London, 1812), Colonel Henry Yule edited *The Diary of William Hedges* (1681-1687) in two volumes published from London, 1838, Thomas Bowrey's *A Geographical Account of Countries round the Bay of Bengal* (1669-1679), second series No. XII, edited by Sir Richard C. Temple from Cambridge in 1903, Arthur Coke Burnell edited *The Voyage of John Huyghan Van Linschoten to the East Indies*, Vol. I published from London, 1835, Abbe De Guyon's *A New History of the East Indies*, Vols. 1-2, published from London, 1757 and John Harries edited *Navigantium at que Hinorantium Bibliotheca or A Complete Collection of Voyages and Travels*, Vol. I, edited from London in 1814, deserve mention as containing stray references to early hazards of the merchants of East India Company to set up trade centres at Orissa and their encounters with the naib-nazims of Orissa. Moreover, nine volumes of James Mill's *The History of British India*, edited by H. H. Wilson and C. R. Wilson's *The Early Annals of the English in Bengal* in 3 volumes (Calcutta, 1895) and Edward Thomas' *The Revenue Sources of the Mughal Empire in India* (1593-1707) published from London in 1871, are of great importance to trace

the rise and decline of Balasore trade in the eighteenth century. But the Archival records at the India Office or Commonwealth Relations Office at London contain volumes of Home Miscellaneous Series, particularly its volumes 46 to 75 contain valuable information about Orissa trade relations with the naib-nazims of Orissa and Nawabs of Bengal. Besides Bengal Public Consultations, Factory Records still unpublished, Court Minutes, Letter Books containing letters to and from Bengal may unearth valuable information on Balasore and Hariharpur trade. Some studies have been made by Ashin Dasgupta and Om Prakash on the Dutch Records but printed documents with English translation on Balasore trade are yet to be published and probed.

East India Company's government in Bengal conquered Orissa in 1803 and immediately the civil government was set up. The records of the British administrators may be classified into three groups: (1) Correspondence sent from the Cuttack Division to Calcutta, mainly revenue and judicial proceedings and records concerning administration of Jagannath temple and Customs House records, (2) Revenue and judicial proceedings of the Governor-General-in-Council and the proceedings volumes of Revenue Department sent to Cuttack contain important administrative policy decision, and (3) Letters sent to the Court and received from the Court of Directors at London are interspersed with references to the historical facts of the Medieval Orissa. The Parliamentary papers, particularly concerning *Report on Administration of the Salt Mahals of Orissa* of 1856 and the *Fifth Report from the Select Committee*, 1812 edited by W. K. Firminger in 3 volumes (Calcutta, 1917) contain many references to both the Mughal and Maratha rule in Orissa, particularly her revenue administration. The records are of the nineteenth century but they contain valuable information, excerpts of land-grants, reports, accounts of the old people, sunnuds and evidences of the land-owners concerning land revenue administration of Orissa during the Mughal and Maratha rule in the eighteenth century. The National Archives, Delhi contains volumes of Home and Foreign Departments Proceedings from which information concerning revenue administration of Orissa in the eighteenth century could be collected.

In the last category will come the contemporary literary sources and the private records preserved in the Orissa State Archives. Some of the land-grants were printed in the appendices of George Toynbee's *Treaties on Orissa* and some *pattas* (land-grants) were published in the volumes of *Journals of Orissa Historical Society* and other regional journals now extinct. In Orissa Museum publication counter some back volumes of journals were available. The State Archives at Bhubaneswar has preserved about fifteen hundred files of private records mostly in the shape of land-grants, *sunnads* and petitions to the Company's government with reference to the old records. Some erstwhile feudatory chiefs of Orissa like those of Khariar, Kalahandi and Mayurbhanj have preserved some private papers for use of the research scholars which contain land-grants, correspondence between the chiefs and the naib-nazims, copies of papers presented to the Privy Council on different occasions. In the literary history of medieval Orissa very few literary works contain historical traditions. This is called *Kviti Juga* or the period of rhetorical verses full of ornamental poems depicting love dalliance between the prince and princess. The Vaisnava poets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries gave way to Upendra Bhanja and his followers. The epics of Sarla Dasa and five associates of Balaram Dasa had already passed away but the historical narratives of their works supply stray references to the socio-economic condition of Orissa on the eve of the Muslim invasion. The *Madla Panji* or the Temple chronicle of Puri edited by A. B. Mohanty (Cuttack, 1940) is the most important, though not authentic, source of history of the medieval period. The British Orientalists of the nineteenth century, particularly Stirling, Beames and Hunter extensively utilised this source and ultimately landed in erroneous conclusions as the chronicles are sometimes unhistorical and based on spurious evidences. Recently Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar had published seven volumes catalogue of Sanskrit manuscripts, four volumes of Oriya manuscripts and Oriya poems like *Chandrakala Natika*, *Parimala*, *Premalochana*, *Kalpalata*, *Kalabati* and *Chata Ichhavati* written mostly in the sixteenth century or later based on folk-legends on the theme of love dalliance between prince and princess and the hazard they

had to encounter leading sometimes to tragedy in life. The poems invariably depict the real life story of the then people of Orissa very significant for research on social history. Some more manuscripts are still to be studied by the scholars conversant with the medieval dialect and script of Orissa. The works of Vaisnava apostles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly *Rasagovinda* of Dina Krishna Dasa, *Rasik Mangala* of Rasikananda and others of Gopiballavpur monastery in Midnapur district have left their accounts of contact with Puri which form a basis of socio-economic life of the then Orissa and the Frontier Bengal.

II

Alivardi Khan, tired of war with Bhonsle Rajas of Nagpur ceded the revenue of Orissa to Raghuji I in 1751 up to the river 'Sonamakia' (Subarnarekha). From 1751 to 1803 the Maratha rulers virtually became the revenue collectors of Orissa though *de jure* sovereignty of Orissa remained with Gajapati rulers of of Khurda, called 'Rauta' (Viceroy) of the cult of Jagannath Puri. The Maratha rulers, devout Hindus as they were, acknowledged this deified monarchy and dual sovereignty of the land and over its people. As the Bengal government became Orissa's next door neighbour British revenue and judicial records contain copious references to the political history of Orissa. The history of Orissa was more or less illuminated in this period by various sources of information classified into four categories: (1) Persian and Marathi sources, (2) British archival sources, (3) Literary sources, and (4) Folklore and private records.

Main theme of the Maratha rule in Orissa was the rapid decline of the agrarian economy of Orissa leading to political anarchy while the feudatory chiefs endeavoured to carve out independent principalities at the cost of neighbouring chiefs, increase in the quantum of taxation over the ryots (cultivators), large-scale migration of population to the British territories of Bengal and Madras leading to frontier incursions, decline in the manufacture of salt and cotton textile and the Company's

endeavour to annex Orissa to connect Bengal with Madras Presidency to crush Tipu Sultan of Mysore by rapid army mobilisation from Bengal and to stop frontier incursions in the border territories of the Company's empire to collect revenue of Orissa necessary for her military adventures in the south.

Keeping these problems of the Maratha rule in Orissa in view one can easily collect materials from the British archival sources which form the basis of sources of information for modern Bengal in the eighteenth century. As already mentioned, *Seir-ul-Mutakherin* and *Riyazus-Salatin* are two most important Persian sources for the history of Maratha rule in Orissa. Besides, eleven volumes of *Calendar of Persian Correspondence* contain copious references to the political and economic history of the period. But the most important sources are considered to be the treatises written in the Marathi dialect, some of which have already been translated and edited in English by competent scholars. G. S. Sardesai edited multi-volume papers of the Peshwa Daftar, called *Marathi Riyasat*, *Madhya Bibhaga*, particularly Vol. II contains *Nagpurkar Bhonslenchen Bakhar* and in English translation *Selection from the Peshwa Daftar* with English abstract, contain copious references to the Bhonsle rule in Orissa. T. S. Shajwalkar edited *Nagpur Affairs* in three volumes as Deccan College Monograph series No. 9 from Poona in 1954, S. L. Vaidya edited *A Selection of Papers from the Records of Vaidya family*, *Vaidya Daftar* in five volumes and Y. M. Kale edited *Poona Residency Correspondence* in five volumes from Poona by 1938. Besides these Maratha sources the Archives of Bombay and Nagpur preserve some Marathi sources still unutilised by the scholars. The printed and translated sources yield sufficient information for the socio-economic history of the then Orissa besides its political history. Many British Residents were staying at Nagpur and regularly sending confidential reports to Calcutta. Mention may be made of *Early European Travellers in the Nagpur Territories* published from Nagpur in 1904, Gense and Banaji edited first three volumes of British embassy to Poona, published by Gaikwads of Baroda in 1934, Richard Jenkin's *Report on the Territories of the Raja of Nagpur*

Submitted to the Supreme Government of India published from Nagpur in 1923, Grant Duff's magnum opus, *History of the Mahrattas* in three volumes edited by S. M. Edwards (Calcutta, 1912) and C. U. Wills' *British Relations with the Nagpur State in the Eighteenth Century* (Nagpur, 1926) which contain copious references to the Nagpur's diplomatic relation with the Company's government on latter's administration over Orissa. Major J. Rennel's *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan* (London, 1793) also is a significant contribution to the socio-economic life of the then Orissa.

The unpublished records may be classified into mainly two categories : Those which could be studied from the National Archives, Delhi and Judicial and Revenue Records to be studied from Bengal Record Room at Calcutta. The archival records at Delhi belong to the Home and Foreign Departments of which Public Proceedings and Consultations, Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, Secret Proceedings and files of Consultations and Political Proceedings had copious references to the anarchical condition in the then Orissa. The miscellaneous volumes of the Home Department and micro-films from British Museum Additional Manuscripts are of great interest. The Calcutta Record Room had archival records of mainly five categories relevant to the then history of Orissa : (1) Proceedings of the Governor-General-in-Council in the Revenue Department, (2) Proceedings of the Committee of Revenue and later on after 1786, Board of Revenue at Fort William, (3) Proceedings of the Judicial Department (both Civil and Criminal), (4) Letters to and from the Court of Directors, and (5) Proceedings of the Board of Trade (Commercial) contain copious references to the British relations with the Bhonsle rulers in Nagpur over Orissa. But the most important archival sources could be found out from the Midnapur Collectorate Record Room which comprised (1) General letters, (2) Settlement letters, (3) Jellasure Correspondence, (4) Pataspur letters, and (5) Hidgellce and Tamlook Salt letters. The records, brittle, worms-eaten and on the verge of destruction, without any copy at the Calcutta Record Room, if studied thoroughly, would throw light on the Marathi frontier

incursions (*Bargir Hangama*) on the Bengal-Orissa border areas. Some of the archival sources, which have already been printed may be mentioned, deserving special importance : (1) Parliamentary papers (1812-13), Vol. 10, paper No. 331, Vols. 8-9 (1808-13), *Fourth Report No. 47, Fifth Report* edited by W. K. Firminger (3 Vols., Calcutta, 1817), 1832, Vols. 1-4, *Select Committee Report* (1832), and *Report on Salt* (1856, Vol. 26) may be mentioned as few examples preserved in the National Library, Calcutta. Secondly, some contemporary and nineteenth-century administrative reports contain references to the eighteenth-century economic condition of Orissa. Walter Hamilton's *A Geographical, Statistical and Historical Description of Hindusthan and Adjacent Countries*, Vols. 1-2 (London, 1820), S. L. Maddox, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement of the Province of Orissa*, Vols. 1-2 (Calcutta, 1900), G. Milne, *Notes on Cattle in Bihar and Orissa* (Patna, 1915), L. S. S. O'Malley's *District Gazetteers* (Calcutta, 1906-26), *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the Famine in Bengal and Orissa in 1866*, Vols. 1-2 (Calcutta, 1867) and Henry Rickett's *Report on the Districts of Midnapur including Hijlee and Cuttack* (Calcutta, 1858) contain valuable information on the Maratha rule in Orissa in the eighteenth century. Some British archival records of the nineteenth century concerning Orissa were published, such as (1) R. P. Chanda edited *Selection from Official letters and Records relating to the History of Mayurbhanj*, Vols. 1-3 (Baripada, 1942), K. K. Datta and others edited *Letters to and from the Court of Directors, Fort William - India House Correspondence in multi-volumes* (Delhi, 1958 onwards), G. W. Forest, *Selection from the State Papers of the Governor-Generals of India, Warren Hastings, Cornwallis* in multi-volumes (Oxford, 1910-26) as well as by the same author, *Selections from Letters, etc., Maratha series* (Calcutta, 1885), *Selection of Papers from Foreign Department* in 3 volumes, 1772-85 (Calcutta, 1890), James Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs, etc.* (London, 1834), G. R. Glieg, *Memoirs of the Life of Rt. Hon. Warren Hastings, etc.*, 3 volumes (London, 1841), Rev. J. Long, *Selection from Unpublished Records, etc.* (Calcutta, 1869), Harry Verelst, *A View of Rise, Progress and Present State of English Government in Bengal*

(London, 1772) and Henry Vansittart, *A Narrative of the Transactions in Bengal* (1760-64), Vols. 1-3 (London, 1766).

The contemporary Oriya literary sources throw significant light on the political horizon of the region. The most important treatise is the *Samara Taranga* by Brajanath Badajena which was edited by Debendra Mohanty and published from Cuttack, 1968. *Madla Panji* or the Temple chronicle of Puri edited by A. B. Mohanty (Cuttack, 1940) also throws light on the political history of the period. The *Granthabali* or collection of works by Fakir Mohan Senapati in two volumes edited by Ananta Mishra (Cuttack, 1965) contain stray references to the socio-economic condition of the then Orissa. *Satika Stuti Chintamani* and other works of Bhima Bhoi, the poet of the Mahima cult in Orissa (ed. by Jagannath Singha, Cuttack, no date) contain mystic elements and religious fervour of the people of the land groaning under the economic and social oppression of the rulers in the first half of the nineteenth century which may be of some importance to the social historians of this period. Some research studies have recently been undertaken by scholars to collect Loka-Geeti (folk-lore) of different regions of Orissa which contain stray references to historical data. Of these studies mention may be made of Kunja Bihari Das, *Odiya Loka Geeti O Kohani* (Cuttack, 1958) and *Palli Geeti Sanchayana*, pts. I-III (Cuttack, 1974) and Chakradhara Mahapatra, *Utkala Gaoli Geeti*, pt. I (Cuttack, 1959). Some more works are expected to be published within years to come. The Orissa State Archives at Bhubaneswar and the erstwhile native rulers of Khariar, Kalahandi and Mayurbhanj had preserved some private records in the shape of land-grants, appeal and judgement and copies of exhibits to the Privy Council Cases which form the documents of private records, we have already mentioned in the first section. But these documents throw only sidelight on the political history of the mainland of Orissa.

III

The first Indian to write the history of Orissa was Pyari Mohan Acharya in the second half of the nineteenth century as a textbook for school children. R. D. Banerjee, R. L. Mitra and M. M. Chakravorti also compiled their works on history of Orissa, stressing on the glory of the Hindu rulers of the ancient and Maratha periods. They collected different categories of epigraphic, literary and archival source-materials, classified them with precision and laid down avenue for modern historical research on the political and socio-economic history of Orissa of the period under review. But recent trends of research have revealed beyond doubt the gaps in their narration and the mistakes they committed. These deficiencies in their works are due to their inability to tap all possible sources of information owing to the non-availability of historical data at that particular moment of their studies. In the last two decades of the present century a group of historians like B. C. Roy, and B. S. Das have made attempts to write the administrative and revenue history of the then Orissa. But none except B. S. Das had attempted to write on the socio-economic history of the state in terms of modern trends of historical analysis. Moreover, they have neglected to utilise socio-anthropological data strewn over the whole of Orissa, dependent as they were on archival sources. With the exception of B. S. Das others have highlighted British view-points and do not answer a basic question as to why Orissa despite so many beneficial measures undertaken by the British Raj for modernisation of the economy, failed to sustain a self-generating economy for her recovery. The reasons are to be found out from the history of Orissa during the period under our discussion and the authors failed to tap all the archival sources at the National Archives, Delhi and preserved at different centres of London for paucity of funds. The regional records rooms of Madras, Waltair, Midnapur and Bankura still remain to be explored. The private papers preserved by different individuals and native chiefs are to be explored more thoroughly to collect historical data from the grass-roots level. The Maratha and Persian sources in Nagpur

and Bombay archives are still to be explored, translated and published for the future generation of scholars. The collection of oral history and tribal history of this period is totally inadequate because of non-cooperation of ignorant population to participate with the present battalion of scholars to collect socio-anthropological data, very relevant for the historical research of this period.

Modern Period

ARCHIVAL SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF MODERN ORISSA

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AS ELSEWHERE, in Orissa, too, the modern period of history is conventionally regarded to have begun when the British rule was established in the region. This was in 1803. But then, as elsewhere again, British connexion with the region far antedated the British rule in it. In the 1630's and later, prospects of lucrative trade drew the merchants of the English East India Company to coastal Orissa where, at Hariharpur, Balasore, Pipli, Ganjam and other places factories were successively established. The factories flourished and languished in accordance with the political configuration of the times fast changing; local rulers' disposition and the English merchants' resilience had also much to do with the development and decay of the early English factories in Orissa.

A full-length study of these factories is still a desideratum, although some learned papers have been written on them. A study of the English factors' relations with the local merchants and artisans, and their rivalry with other European merchants, especially the French, would be interesting in the context of the local political situation. Although most of the original factory records are in U.K., there are some valuable materials in the Tamil Nadu archives and West Bengal State archives dealing with the foreign trade in coastal Orissa in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

British relations with Orissa assumed an increasingly political overtone following the Maratha occupation of Orissa in 1751 and the British ascendancy in Bengal six years later. The Marathas under the Bhonsles of Nagpur and Berar held Orissa

till 1803, when defeat in war obliged them to cede it to the British. Successive British rulers from Clive to Wellesley treated the Bhonsle power in Orissa both as an ally and as a potential enemy, depending on which of the two postures served their interests best at a particular time. Anglo-Bhonsle relations from 1757 to 1803, with particular reference to Orissa, had three main elements in them: British resistance to the Bhonsle demands for the regular payment of *chauth* as provided in the treaty between the Bengal Nawab, Alivardi Khan, and Raghuji Bhonsle I in 1751; the Bhonsle resistance to the alternate British pressure and persuasion to effect the cession of Orissa with a view to linking up the British possessions in Bengal and the Northern Circars, and preventing the French from obtaining a base in coastal Orissa; and British eagerness to demarcate the boundary between Bengal and Orissa. Generally speaking, the British and the Bhonsles in Orissa had a common interest in maintaining peaceful, though not uniformly cordial, relations when both had enough troubles on hand.¹

For Anglo-Bhonsle relations pertaining to Orissa one needs to look up the Bengal Select and Secret Committee Proceedings, Foreign (Secret) Department Proceedings in the National Archives, the Fort William - India House Correspondence and the vast mass of Persian Correspondence, which, happily, are printed. There was no love lost between the Bhonsles and the Peshwas, which is clear from their correspondence in the records of the Poona Residency and in those of the Vaidya daftar. The Nagpur Residency Records of the period 1799-1801, preserved in the old C.P. Secretariat Record Room, Nagpur, deal with the British policy towards the Bhonsles in Orissa; records of this series of the period 1803-1827 have much interesting information on Sambalpur and the neighbouring states in western Orissa and the British relations with them.² This information could also be had in the correspondence of Monstuart Elphinstone, Resident at Nagpur (1804-08).³ Orissa did figure in the Peshwas' correspondence with the Bhonsles, and hence a look into the relevant papers in the Maharashtra State archives in Bombay is worthwhile; this could also be said of the impressive collection of

materials on the Bhonsles at the Sharda Ashram, Yavatmal (Maharashtra).⁴

Since some two decades ago scholars have made extensive use of archival source-materials to write the history of modern Orissa. The British officers of the nineteenth century, Andrew Stirling, John Beames, George Toynbee and William Hunter, who wrote on some aspects of this history, made only a very limited use of archival materials, and that with no object of giving an objective, systematic and full-length account of events. Even those Oriya scholars, who were indeed pioneers in writing the history of British Orissa, used archival sources in U.K. for their work.⁵ And this for very weighty reasons.

Archival source-materials on the history of modern Orissa are found at no one place in India. There was no province of Orissa till 1936, its several parts being under different administrative authorities functioning from different places. Thus, of the present thirteen districts of the Orissa State today, only three—Cuttack, Puri and Balasore—were under the Bengal government till 1912, when they formed parts of the newly-created province of Bihar and Orissa with its capital at Patna. The present district of Sambalpur was in the Central Provinces and Berar till 1905 when it was amalgamated with the Orissa Division of the Bengal Presidency. Ganjam and Koraput, the two districts of south Orissa, were under Madras administration till 1936. Dhenkanal, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Kalahandi, Balangir and Baud-Phulbani—all feudatory princely states, were under the authority of the Government of India through either the Superintendents of the Orissa Tributary Mahals or the Political Agents. In such circumstances of political and administrative disintegration of Orissa till 1936, writing the history of the Oriya-speaking tracts involved the collection of materials from a large number of archives, such as the ones in Calcutta, Patna, Madras, Nagpur and New Delhi.

So far as the use of historical materials is concerned, the Orissa State Archives at Bhubaneswar is a post-independence institution. It is yet to grow to the extent desirable from the point of view of catering to historical research. Happily, how-

ever, the recent acquisitions in the archives, such as the voluminous papers of the Board of Revenue, district records of Balasore, the Cuttack and Balasore Sa't papers, the Customs House papers, etc. have been found very useful for research. But even now, the lack of exhaustive indices and guides to records in the archives often oblige scholars to continue to collect materials from other archives with a longer association with historical research and consequently offering better facilities for its pursuit.

Generally speaking, for records pertaining to events in coastal Orissa, for the period 1803-1912, the scholar has to work in the Calcutta archives; for records of the same region but of the period 1912 to 1935, he has to work in the Bihar State archives, Patna. For records relating to Ganjam and Koraput, working in the Tamil Nadu archives in Madras is essential. The records of the Commissioners of Orissa, who were also the Superintendents of the Orissa Tributary Mahals, are good source-materials for studying the activities of the Oriya aristocracy who held far-flung landed estates. Materials on events in western Orissa, Sambalpur, Kalahandi and adjacent areas are available in the Foreign (Political and Military) Department papers in the Nagpur Record Office.

Just as not all source-materials are available at one place, not in all archives could one get the materials he is looking for. Thus, any particular document, if unavailable in the Calcutta archives, for example, could be had in the Patna archives, the materials having been transferred to the latter. Similarly, following the formation of Orissa in 1936, many records from Patna and Madras were transferred to the new province. Quite often more than one copy of important documents were printed by the Government and sent to various administrative headquarters for their information, and hence, the patient and perseverant scholar need have no disappointment over his failure to obtain the document he wants from any particular archives.

This is particularly true of the documents dealing with matters involving more than one administrative authority—say, for example, disputes on boundary tracts, suppression of revolts, apprehension of criminals, construction and use of communication

and trade links such as railways and roads; the operation of excise laws, and the production of and trade in commercial goods.

In the private papers of Governors-General, Viceroy and other important officers of the British Government in India, which are available in microfilms in the National Archives of India and in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, there are references to Orissa. For example, the story of the annexation of Sambalpur could be had in the private correspondence of Lord Dalhousie; in the papers of Lord Lawrence one would get an account of the disastrous famine in Orissa in 1866. That Lord Curzon wanted the administrative integration of Oriya-speaking tracts is clear from his private papers on the point. For political movements in Orissa in the post-1900 period, private papers of Lords Hardinge II, Chelmsford and Zetland are worth looking up. Lords Willingdon and Linlithgow had to deal with the problem of the creation of the Orissa Province, and so their private papers need also be studied.

Prominent Indian leaders such as Gandhiji, Nehru and Subhash Bose had correspondence with Oriya nationalist leaders such as Gopabandhu Das and Harekrushna Mahatab. Records of the Indian National Congress and private papers of prominent Indian leaders would be helpful in writing the history of Orissa's involvement in the freedom movement. Unfortunately, however, the National Archives of India and the Nehru Memorial Library do not have private papers of most of the heads of the administration in Bengal, Bihar, Madras, Central Provinces and Berar and Orissa, while it is these papers which contain intimate details about events in British Orissa.

Settlement reports, Census reports, reports of special officers on specific issues and statistical abstracts—all relating to Orissa and all available in the National Archives and State Archives provide useful data on the economic and social history of Orissa. Periodical reports of the Police Commissioners of Bengal provide guidance to the incidence of crimes in the Orissa Division of the Bengal Presidency. For crimes in the Ganjam and Koraput districts of south Orissa, reports of the police authorities in the Madras Presidency are useful. The crime rates in the early nineteenth century often constituted an important pointer to the

impact of the British rule on the local people. For the educational development of the Oriya-speaking people, the periodical reports of the Directors of Public Instruction in Bengal and Madras are invaluable source-materials.

Records pertaining to the British relations with the feudatory princely states of Orissa are preserved mainly in the Foreign (internal) Proceedings of the Government of India in the National Archives. In the Nagpur Record Office there are interesting papers on Sambalpur, Kalahandi, Bonai and other princely states of western Orissa. For papers on Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and adjacent states in northern Orissa one could study political department proceedings in the Calcutta archives. In the Tamil Nadu archives are carefully preserved many interesting documents on Parlakhemundi, Jeypore and other lesser known feudal estates of south Orissa.

One could also hope to get valuable materials on the administration of princely states of Orissa in the custody of the descendants of the former rajas and zamindars, some of whom had large collections of books, journals, state papers and newspaper clippings, particularly of the period, 1900-1947. The record rooms in the palaces of the former chiefs of Parlakhemundi, Mayurbhanj, Balangir-Patna and Kanika, in particular, are worth exploration.

\ The Jagannath Temple Correspondence in the Orissa State Archives constitutes a mine of information on the administration of the temple, an institution having a bearing on many aspects of the life of the people of Orissa. No social history of Orissa could be written without a thorough study of the cult of Jagannath. Dr Hermann Kulke of the Orissa Research Project, South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University, and Shri Prabhat Mukherjee⁶ deserve special mention for having made extensive use of the Jagannath Temple Correspondence for their excellent works on the Jagannath Temple and the cult of Jagannath.

The priests of the temple and heads of several *maths* at Puri have maintained over many generations lists of pilgrims from different parts of India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The lists with addresses of the pilgrims visiting Puri through the ages

could be put to use while making an indepth study of the temple town with special reference to the socio-economic factors contributing to its growth.

Both in the Orissa State Museum and in the possession of former rajas, zamindars and aristocratic families there are palm-leaf manuscripts from which some historical data of the period under review could be gleaned. However, they are not absolutely dependable as historical tools unless their contents are corroborated by more authentic sources.

Stages of the political evolution of Orissa from the 1890's to 1936⁷ could be traced in the Proceedings of the Legislative Councils of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, Madras and C.P. and Berar. References to Orissa also occur in the Proceedings of the Indian Legislative Council and those of the Council of States. Quite a few reports submitted to the Government of Bengal, Madras, C.P. and Berar, and Madras contain facts on different parts of Orissa on specific issues. For example, the Annual Reports on the Administration of Bengal up to 1912 have information on the 'Moral and Material Progress' of the Orissa Division of the Bengal Presidency. There are also Miscellaneous Reports on the Orissa Division and the Annual General Administration Reports on Orissa; the developments in Ganjam and Koraput till 1936 are summarised in the Annual Administration Reports of the Madras Presidency; for western Orissa such reports of the C.P. and Berar are helpful. Official reports of Governors' tours in different districts of Orissa containing their acquaintance with and reaction to local problems need close study. Reports of special committees set up to examine the question of administrative integration of all the Oriya-speaking tracts are indispensable source-materials for reconstructing the history of modern Orissa; Orissa also figured in reports on Indian constitutional reforms.

In Orissa, as elsewhere, district records have been the least utilised source-materials, although they are the most valuable for writing what has come to be known as micro-history. Some of the district records have been brought to the Orissa State Archives

to the immense benefit of researchers ; so have been the records of the Board of Revenue and the Cuttack Commissioner's office, which, however, are to be fully utilised by scholars. The Ganjam district records at Chhatrapur have much information on the zamindars of south Orissa whose resistance to the British rule often caused discontent in the local tribal population traditionally attached to the zamindars. For writing the revenue history of the districts, in particular, district records are of great importance. However, lack of indices, handlists and any proper arrangement of the district records makes their scholarly use a very difficult job indeed. Official neglect of these records for ages has reduced them to just heaps of brittle papers. Yet, sometimes the researcher, who had vainly looked for some important documents in the well-maintained archives in Calcutta, Madras, Patna and Nagpur, may discover them, buried in dust heaps in the murky corners of some district record rooms.

Although the Christians constitute no more than some three per cent of the present population of Orissa, the Christian missionaries of several denominations played no mean part in the renaissance in Orissa. Their contribution to Oriya literature and to the spread of western education, their work among the tribals, and above all, their attitude to the local socio-religious institutions could be best studied in the official papers of the missionary organisations. The Carey Library at Serampore (West Bengal) has a rich and very carefully preserved collection of materials of the many-sided activities of the Baptist missionaries in Orissa. However, the headquarters of all the missionary orders in India working in Orissa lay outside Orissa, and this is a problem which the scholar working on the impact of the Christian missionaries on the Orissan society has to face. Offices of the missionary orders in Orissa do not have data of much historical value. Missionary reports on the socio-religious life of the Oriya people in the nineteenth century constitute an important source-material, but then, quite often the reports are heavily loaded with prejudice and contempt for the local customs, conventions and institutions. Evidently, evangelical zeal often got the better of objective narration of facts.

The Press in Orissa was of a much later and tardier growth than in the older and neighbouring provinces, although its impact on the local life was very notable. Copies of the *Utkal Dipika* (1866-1933) are available in the Orissa State Archives, the paper reflecting the new mood of the Oriya people, their new consciousness and new aspirations consequent on the gradual spread of English education in them. For tracing the cultural renaissance in Orissa, the trends in the evolution of its literature, music and drama, the scholar has to cull materials from the *Utkal Dipika*, which more than anything else, articulated the new spirit in the Oriya people. The *Samaj*, started by Gopabandhu Das, the most well-known Oriya nationalist leader, has remained over the last six decades the most influential Oriya newspaper, both forming public opinion and focussing it on many an issue. For reconstructing the political history of Orissa, particularly political movements in British Orissa, the back issues of the paper in the *Samaj* office at Cuttack are indispensable source materials. Its present editor, Dr Radhanath Rath, who combines in himself both dedicated political leadership and gifted literary expertise, has a large personal collection of materials which the scholar could profitably draw on for his work on modern Orissa.

Some of Dr Rath's contemporaries, such as Dr Harekrushna Mahatab, Rajkrishna Bose, Nabakrushna Chowdhury and Pabitra Mohan Pradhan, have also their private collections, mostly correspondence with important public men, which, when donated to archives or public libraries, would be immensely useful to researchers. Fortunately, papers of Madhusudan Das, an architect of modern Orissa, have been collected, thus facilitating the task of scholars who wish to evaluate the role of this great man in many a field of creative activity.

The Ganjam Kala Parishad, Berhampur (Ganjam) has a collection of the old issues of the local paper, *Asha*, which articulated the agitation for the amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking tracts under one administration. Some weekly and monthly papers brought out from Balasore, Cuttack and Sambalpur from time to time between 1900 and 1936 could be useful to scholars only if they are collected and preserved at one place.

Newspapers in Bengal and Bihar generally gave coverage to events in coastal Orissa while those in Madras, and C.P. and Berar reported and commented on developments in south and western Orissa, respectively. Hence, the record offices and libraries of the neighbouring states of Orissa should be looked up for copies of old newspapers having facts on Orissa. The *Annual Report on the Newspapers of Bihar and Orissa, 1919-36*, and the *Selections from the Native Newspapers* of Madras, Bengal, and C.P. and Berar available in the National Archives have interesting data with which to measure the political temper of the period 1900-1936 in Orissa.

Historical works on modern Orissa based on archival sources are not too many; and most of them deal with political matters only. Comprehensive studies on the British rule in Orissa from 1803 to 1936—all revised versions of doctoral dissertations—have come out; the result is that one gets a fair knowledge of the main strands of the British policy in Orissa and the main features of their administration. Social and economic history of the region is yet to interest scholars and archival source-materials on the theme are awaiting both exploration and extensive use. Even such an obviously political theme as the British relations with the feudatory princely states of Orissa, on which a vast mass of materials exists in the National Archives, the Calcutta and Nagpur archives, has not been worked upon. The land systems in the princely states would be a good theme for research.

There is as yet no history of important districts drawn on district records, let alone any history of important towns. For the latter, municipality records would be helpful provided they could be salvaged from the very bad state in which they exist at present. A painstaking examination of the proceedings of the High Courts of the provinces in which parts of the present-day Orissa lay till 1936 would add a new dimension to any history of the social and economic development of Orissa under the British that scholars may write.

Although archival materials have gone into the writing of the five-volume official *History of the Freedom Movement in Orissa*, a lot more such materials and of a much varied nature

could be utilised to bring out an enlarged and revised version of the work. A closer study of the C.I.D. reports and Police Department papers in the archives in Calcutta, Patna, Nagpur, Bhopal and New-Delhi would enable the scholar to add new perspectives to Orissa's role in the national freedom movement. The popular uprisings in some princely states against both the oppressive local rajas and the British government are a subject of great interest, particularly if an attempt is made to find a pattern in similar uprisings in other areas. May be, the erstwhile rajas and members of the ruling elite have in their private collection confidential communication that passed between themselves, setting out plans for coordinated action to meet the popular challenge. Private papers of political leaders of Orissa who were active in the popular movements in princely states would shed new light on the subject.

No study of the economic impact of the British rule in Orissa would be complete without the aid of papers on the railways connecting different parts of Orissa with other regions. The Bengal-Nagpur Railway was the most important 'economic artery' of modern Orissa. The Mayurbhanj Light Railway and the Parlakhemundi-Naupada Light Railway had a limited impact on the tribal tracts through which they passed. Internal trade in Orissa had roads as its main vehicle. Papers of the Public Works Department need a close study for understanding the economic impact of roads and irrigation canals.

The tribes of Orissa, constituting almost a quarter of its population, are awaiting historical study, although for long they have been of great anthropological interest. British impact on the tribal life, which was caught between the irresistible forces of change and strong bonds of tradition, could be a subject of interdisciplinary study—historians, anthropologists and sociologists being involved in it. Rummaging through old records of the districts with a large tribal population in them would indeed be a very trying job for the scholar, but it would surely be a rewarding undertaking in the long run.⁸ Both in the Foreign and Home Department Proceedings of the Government of India in the National Archives there are materials on the tribals of Orissa as there are also in the Judicial Proceedings of the Madras and

Bengal Governments. The Proceedings of the Orissa Hill Agency, also called the Meriah Agency, set up by the Government to suppress the rites of human sacrifice and female infanticide, would yield a wealth of facts on the traditional institutions of the tribesmen which the British government abolished in their zeal for social reclamation of the tribal population.

In conclusion it could be said that Orissa being not a very well-researched area, there exists a vast scope for a very intensive use of archival source-materials for writing the history of modern Orissa. The location, identification and acquisition of these materials from places far between, their proper preservation at the State Archives, and the easy accessibility of the materials with the help of indices, catalogues and hand-lists would promote historical research in Orissa. There is as much scope for the cooperation of official custodians of Government records at places outside Orissa as for that of private individuals having historical materials with them to help build up a strong archival tradition in a region which, while being in the national mainstream of events, has retained through ages a distinct personality of its own.

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SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF ORISSA (1900—1936)

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AN ATTEMPT has been made in the following pages to discuss the sources of Orissan history relating to the main events of the period 1900—1936. The Utkal Union Conference, the amalgamation movement leading to the creation of the Province of Orissa, and the struggle for freedom were some of the leading events of the period. Orissa was then a Division under the Presidency of Bengal administered through a Commissioner from Cuttack, who concurrently functioned as the Superintendent of the Tributary Mahals. There were three districts in the Division : Balasore, Cuttack and Puri, to which Sambalpur was added in 1905. At the turn of the century Orissa was linked up with Calcutta through the East Coast Railway and the growth of education resulted in the emergence of an elite class. This class was bent upon uplifting the Oriya community from an unenviable state of administrative neglect and apathy. Orissa had been politically dismembered, placing her racial integrity, culture, language and economic interests in utter jeopardy. At such juncture the vernacular Press played the most significant role in trying to galvanise a moribund people by arousing in them national consciousness.

Newspapers :

Among several newspapers which made their appearance and contributed their mite to this growth of national consciousness the foremost was the *Utkal Dipika*. This weekly paper was first published in 1866 from Cuttack under the redoubtable editorship of Gouri Shankar Roy, continued in circulation till 1934 as one

of the leading papers of Orissa. During this period through news item, editorials and letters to the editor this paper brought to focus numerous problems besetting the Oriya community and Orissa, and vigorously insisted upon the government to adopt remedial measures. For the study of socio-cultural, political and economic history of the second half of the nineteenth and first three decades of the current century the *Utkal Dipika* is an indispensable source. The tone of the paper in the nineteenth century was strident with criticism, but 'moderate' in the twentieth. It is available with the Utkal Sahitya Samaj Library at Cuttack, Utkal University at Vanivihar and Orissa State Archives at Bhubaneswar.

The Utkal Sahitya Samaj Library at Cuttack is the repository of incomplete sets of the *Asha* (1913-1936), *Odia O Navasamvad* (1889-1921), *Sadhana* (1921-1935), *Satya Samachar* (1930-1936), *Star of Utkal* (1905), *Utkal Varta* (1908-1915), *Utkal Darpan* (1879-1885, 1906-07), *Utkal Sevak* (1914-1934), *Utkal Sahitya* (1913-1938), *Prajanantra* (1924-1932), *Puri Vasi* (1914-1934), *Samvad Vahika* (1872-1923), *Ratnakar* (1915-1920), *Sambalpur Hitaisini* (1895-1922), *Samaj* (1919-1938) and *Gadajat Vasini* (1924-38). A set of *Sambalpur Hitaisini* is available at the Orissa State Archives, Bhubaneswar. This is an indispensable source of information on the history of Western Orissa and the language crisis which led to great public agitation in Sambalpur during 1895 and 1902. The *Samaj* and the *Prajanantra* provide invaluable source-materials for the history of freedom movement in Orissa. In fact, the Gandhian movement of non-cooperation, Civil Disobedience and Salt Satyagraha were made popular through these two papers by their respective founders—Pandit Gopabandhu Das and Harekrushna Mahtab. One can get the old sets of *Samaj* and *Prajanantra* respectively at Gopabandhu Bhavan and the Prajanantra Prachar Samiti Library at Cuttack. The *Asha* published from Berhampur provides a dependable and thorough account of the problems and the socio-political developments in south Orissa. Its renowned editor Sasi Bhusan Rath was a great proponent of Oriya nationalism. As a member of the Legislative Council,

Madras he played a vital role in providing leadership to the Oriya community.

The English newspapers *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *Statesman*, *Indian Mirror*, *Indian Daily News*, *Bande Mataram* (1906-1908), *Bengal Times*, *Bihar Times* and *Hindoo Patriot*, etc. were not much concerned with the affairs of Orissa, as they were mostly preoccupied with the events in Bengal and Calcutta. But one may study these papers at the Newspaper section of the National Library, Calcutta to get a glimpse of the general history of the province.

Annual Confidential Reports on the Native Newspapers :

The British Government was quite sensitive to the writings in the Vernacular and English newspapers published from various towns and capital cities of India. They got prepared regular records of these writings for the information of concerned authorities. Such records are available in the form of *Selections from the Native Newspapers* of Bengal, Mardas, the Central Provinces, and Bihar and Orissa separately. The first three categories are available at the National Archives of India, New Delhi, in micro-films and the reports on the Newspapers of Bihar and Orissa can be studied at the Bihar State Archives, Patna. These reports not only maintain accounts of important events focussed upon by the contemporary newspapers, but also the views of the Government. The trend of thinking in the Government can be ascertained from these Reports.

Private Papers :

During the Governor-Generalship of Lord Curzon and of Lord Hardinge two most significant events which took place in Indian history were the Partition of Bengal and the creation of the Province of Bihar and Orissa. Lord Curzon was very much concerned for the amalgamation of the scattered Oriya-speaking tracts for the maintenance of their cultural identity. He had also immensely helped in the restoration of Oriya as the Court language of Sambalpur in 1901. For making an in-depth study of the language agitation and amalgamation movement in Sambalpur with Orissa in 1905, the Government attitude res-

possible for the famous Risley Circular, the Oriya movement in Ganjam, the decision to retain this Oriya-speaking district as a part of the Madras Presidency, and various other factors leading to the creation of the new Province of Bihar and Orissa in 1912, one has to go through the private papers of Lord Curzon (1899-1905) at the National Archives, New Delhi and those of Lord Hamilton, Secretary of State for India (1895-1903), Lord Hardinge II (1910-1916) at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML). The NMML also preserves the private papers of Lord Chelmsford (1916-1921) and Lord Zetland, the Secretary of State for India (1933-1940) which throw light on the constitutional reforms scheme (1919) and the creation of a separate province for the Oriya-speaking people.

There are some special files on Lord Chelmsford, Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, Lord Hardinge and Lord Morley in the NMML worth studying in connection with Orissa. Equally important are the special files of Sir A. P. Patro of Ganjam who though initially associated with the Oriya Movement, opposed the excision of the district from Madras while he was a Minister of the Province. The files on Sarangdhar Das, the great leader of the Praja Mandal Movement and Dr. Harekrishna Mahtab, the veteran politician, freedom fighter and long time Chief Minister of Orissa, no research scholar can afford to miss while working on the recent history of Orissa.

The Orissa State Archives, Bhubaneswar has been doing well in the collection and preservation of private papers of leading public men in the State. Surendra Mohanty, the renowned author of *Satabdir Surya* and *Kulabraddha* has recently sold the private papers concerning Madhusudan Das to the State Archives. Though he has made use of these papers in writing the above books, an opportunity to study the original papers is now available to the scholars. Any researcher working on the Oriya movement in Ganjam, and particularly Parlakimedi will find the private papers of Dr. Satyanarayan Rajguru quite useful. Dr. Rajguru was closely associated with the Oriya movement in Parlakimedi and Maharaja Srikrishna Chandra Gajapati, the maker of modern

Orissa. A study of the private papers of Rajendra Narayan Bhanj Deo, the Raja of Kanika (now in the custody of his son S. N. Bhanj Deo) provides revealing information on the career of the Raja and his relation with Madhusudan Das. The Raja was a trustworthy lieutenant of Madhusudan and steered the amalgamation move through the Utkal Union Conference and the Legislatures consistently for long thirty years until his efforts yielded the desired results in 1930 when the Simon Commission recommended the creation of a separate province for the Oriya-speaking people. S. N. Bhanj Deo has meticulously preserved his father's personal Diaries, Correspondence, speeches and photographs and is quite helpful to the inquisitive scholars. He is himself a living encyclopaedia on the political events of Orissa for the period 1930-1960 and is in possession of some oral records on the integration of the feudatory States of Saraikeia and Kharswan with Orissa.

Reports and Gazetteers :

There is no dearth of Government publications providing data and information on history, new regulations, policies, Receipts and State of finance, local self-Government, welfare measures of the period under review. The *Annual Reports on the Administration of Bengal*, *Annual Administrative Reports—Bihar and Orissa*, *Madras*, the *Central Provinces*, *Annual General Administration Report—Orissa Division*, *Bihar and Orissa—First Decennial Review (1912-1922)*, *Quinquennial Administrative Report*, and the *Miscellaneous Report on Orissa Division* are most authentic sources of modern history. Following this pattern the Feudatory State of Mayurbhanj also published its *Annual Administrative Report* since the time of Maharaja Sreeram Chandra Bhanj Deo (1892-1912). For research on the growth of education the *General Reports on Public Instruction of Bengal* are important. The *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement of the Province of Orissa* by S. L. Maddox in two volumes is an indispensable source for the history of revenue administration. Maddox, apart from giving a detailed account of the revenue settlement (1890-1900), has exhibited outstanding scholarship in tracing the early and medieval history of Orissa, the early British

possible for the famous Risley Circular, the Oriya movement in Ganjam, the decision to retain this Oriya-speaking district as a part of the Madras Presidency, and various other factors leading to the creation of the new Province of Bihar and Orissa in 1912, one has to go through the private papers of Lord Curzon (1899-1905) at the National Archives, New Delhi and those of Lord Hamilton, Secretary of State for India (1895-1903), Lord Hardinge II (1910-1916) at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML). The NMML also preserves the private papers of Lord Chelmsford (1916-1921) and Lord Zetland, the Secretary of State for India (1933-1940) which throw light on the constitutional reforms scheme (1919) and the creation of a separate province for the Oriya-speaking people.

There are some special files on Lord Chelmsford, Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, Lord Hardinge and Lord Morley in the NMML worth studying in connection with Orissa. Equally important are the special files of Sir A. P. Patro of Ganjam who though initially associated with the Oriya Movement, opposed the excision of the district from Madras while he was a Minister of the Province. The files on Sarangdhar Das, the great leader of the Praja Mandal Movement and Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab, the veteran politician, freedom fighter and long time Chief Minister of Orissa, no research scholar can afford to miss while working on the recent history of Orissa.

The Orissa State Archives, Bhubaneswar has been doing well in the collection and preservation of private papers of leading public men in the State. Surendra Mohanty, the renowned author of *Satabdir Surya* and *Kulabraddha* has recently sold the private papers concerning Madhusudan Das to the State Archives. Though he has made use of these papers in writing the above books, an opportunity to study the original papers is now available to the scholars. Any researcher working on the Oriya movement in Ganjam, and particularly Parlakimedi will find the private papers of Dr. Satyanarayan Rajguru quite useful. Dr. Rajguru was closely associated with the Oriya movement in Parlakimedi and Maharaja Srikrushna Chandra Gajapati, the maker of modern

Orissa. A study of the private papers of Rajendra Narayan Bhanj Deo, the Raja of Kanika (now in the custody of his son S. N. Bhanj Deo) provides revealing information on the career of the Raja and his relation with Madhusudan Das. The Raja was a trustworthy lieutenant of Madhusudan and steered the amalgamation move through the Utkal Union Conference and the Legislatures consistently for long thirty years until his efforts yielded the desired results in 1930 when the Simon Commission recommended the creation of a separate province for the Oriya-speaking people. S. N. Bhanj Deo has meticulously preserved his father's personal Diaries, Correspondence, speeches and photographs and is quite helpful to the inquisitive scholars. He is himself a living encyclopaedia on the political events of Orissa for the period 1930-1960 and is in possession of some oral records on the integration of the feudatory States of Saraikela and Kharswan with Orissa.

Reports and Gazetteers :

There is no dearth of Government publications providing data and information on history, new regulations, policies, Receipts and State of finance, local self-Government, welfare measures of the period under review. The *Annual Reports on the Administration of Bengal*, *Annual Administrative Reports—Bihar and Orissa*, *Madras*, the *Central Provinces*, *Annual General Administration Report—Orissa Division*, *Bihar and Orissa—First Decennial Review (1912-1922)*, *Quinquennial Administrative Report*, and the *Miscellaneous Report on Orissa Division* are most authentic sources of modern history. Following this pattern the Feudatory State of Mayurbhanj also published its Annual Administrative Report since the time of Maharaja Sreeram Chandra Bhanj Deo (1892-1912). For research on the growth of education the *General Reports on Public Instruction of Bengal* are important. The *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement of the Province of Orissa* by S. L. Maddox in two volumes is an indispensable source for the history of revenue administration. Maddox, apart from giving a detailed account of the revenue settlement (1890-1900), has exhibited outstanding scholarship in tracing the early and medieval history of Orissa, the early British

settlement, the character of Oriya peasants, the industries and trade, etc. which flourished once upon a time. Probably no other Government publication of the nineteenth century gives such comprehensive account of Orissa.

In the first half of the present century several attempts were made to introduce constitutional reforms to allow the Indians increasing participation in the Government. The Morley-Minto Reforms, the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms and the India Act of 1935 are milestones in the history of our constitutional development. Whenever such proposal to grant reforms were mooted, the Press in India took keen interest to discuss the issue openly in order to articulate public opinion and enlightened people submitted memoranda through various political and quasi-political associations to the Government either clarifying their stand or elaborating their demands. In this connection the *Constitutional Reforms in India* (1908), *Joint Select Committee on the Government of India Act* (1919), *Indian Constitutional Reforms (Montagu-Chelmsford)*, the *Proceedings of the Simon Commission*, *Reports of the Statutory Commission* (in 17 volumes) *Round Table Conferences*, *Parliamentary Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reforms* (1933), *Proposals for India's Constitutional Reforms* (1933) are of great value.

In 1924 the Government of India had instituted a Commission of inquiry with C. L. Philip and A. C. Duff as members to ascertain the views of the Oriya-speaking people of the Madras Presidency on the issue of their accession to the Orissa Division. The Report of the Commission known as *Philip-Duff Report* is a precious document which supporting the Oriya cause had recommended the excision of Ganjam from Madras. It provided great impetus to the Oriya movement in Ganjam after 1925 till the district was amalgamated with Orissa in 1936. Similarly, the Orissa Boundary Committee or the *O'Donnell Committee Report* (1932) in two volumes contains invaluable statistics on the basis of which the present Orissa Province was created. The first volume contains the report of the Committee, and the numerous memoranda submitted for and against the creation of the proposed province have been compiled in Volume II. To supplement the information

available in these two volumes one should refer the *States Reorganisation Commission's Report* (1955). These Boundary Commission Reports of 1932 and 1955 have thoroughly discussed the controversies concerning Parlakimedi, Saraikela and Kharswan on the basis of population statistics and administrative expediency. It is interesting to note that the Government of India have often taken the help of these two factors while reorganising provincial boundaries. The Memorandum to Orissa Boundary Committee (1931) and the Memorandum of Government of Orissa to the States Reorganisation Commission (1955) are products of deep erudition and scholarship. In 1933 the Government appointed the Orissa Administrative Committee with John Austen Hubback as its Chairman, to consider and recommend the location of the capital of the province, territorial changes and their headquarters, the question of High Court, University, and any other subject which may confront the new provincial administration. The Report of the Administrative Committee is an important document in so far as it prepared the present framework of the Orissa Province.

The *Census of India Reports* of 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931 and 1941 are most valuable for any demographic study. One should also make use of the Census Reports on Madras, Bihar and Orissa, Census Pamphlets on Cuttack, Puri, Balasore and the Orissa Division for detailed statistics on population, language and caste, etc.

Among other Government publications having rich historical value one should mention the list of *District Gazetteers* : Bengal District Gazetteers ; Cuttack (1906), Balasore (1907), Puri (1908), Sambalpur (1909), and Midnapore (1911) by O'Malley ; the Central Provinces District Gazetteers—Sambalpur (1901) by R. V. Russell ; the Ganjam District Manual (1918) by T. J. Maltby and the Orissa District Gazetteers, edited by N. Senapati. The State Gazetteer Department of the Government of Orissa deserves our commendation for thoroughly revising the chapters on history in the District Gazetteers of Sambalpur, and Koraput on the basis of latest archaeological findings and for bringing out Gazetteers on new districts like Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh and Balangir. The Gazetteers on Keonjhar and Kalahandi are at present in the Press and will meet a long academic desideratum when published.

Prior to the creation of the Province of Orissa in 1936, the nominated/elected representatives of the Oriyas were members of the Legislative Councils of Bengal, Madras, and Bihar and Orissa. Prominent among them were Madhusudan Das, R. N. Bhanj Deo, Raja Baikuntha Nath De, Gopabandhu Das, Bisvanath Kar, Sasibhusan Rath, Bisvanath Das, and Godavaris Mishra. Nilakantha Das and Bhubanananda Das were members of the Indian Legislative Assembly. These members not infrequently took active part in the proceedings of the Council/Assembly in the interest of the people they represented. They vigorously fought for redress of the numerous grievances which beset the Oriya-speaking people. The Proceedings of the Provincial Legislative Councils and the Indian Legislative Assembly need therefore be consulted to assess the role of the Legislature in trying to solve the problems of Orissa. Since 1937, the Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Orissa have a direct bearing on the history of the province. How the composition of the parties, the leadership profile, clash of interests between the landholders and the common men influenced the course of political developments in Orissa can be gleaned from these Proceedings.

Unpublished Government Records :

Apart from the above mentioned published records there is a vast mass of unpublished documents in the National and State Archives which are relevant to the study of Orissan history. The Home (Public) and Home (Judicial) Proceedings of India from 1895-1936, the Linguistic Survey of India (G. A. Grierson Proceedings No. 1-53, in two bundles, preserved in the National Archives, the Bengal Political Department Proceedings in the NMML; the proceedings of the Education Department, Political Department, Revenue, Judicial, Law, Appointment, Finance, Municipal and Local Self-Government, preserved in the Bihar State Archives, Patna; Government of Madras—Public Proceedings in the Tamilnadu State Archives, Madras; and the Home—Proceedings in the Central Provinces Record Room at Nagpur are indispensable sources for the researcher. The revenue records for the period 1912-36, relevant to Orissa have now been trans-

ferred from the Board of Revenue Record Room, Cuttack to the Orissa State Archives at Bhubaneswar. In the Orissa State Archives there are numerous records on Salt administration, Jagannath temple administration, Ganjam, Sambalpur, Balasore, Cuttack, Puri districts and the feudatory States. No historical research of the modern period of Orissan history will be complete without a reference to these documents.

History of Freedom Movement :

For the compilation of the history of freedom movement no systematic attempt has been made so far to collect and preserve the records. Orissa showed interest in the Indian National Congress since 1886, but could not sustain it for various reasons. The Annual reports of the Indian National Congress contain a list of delegates attending the annual sessions. These are authentic official records which help the scholars to study the growth of the Congress movement. Till 1920 the political life in Orissa was dominated by the Utkal Union Conference and an amalgamation of the scattered Oriya-speaking tracts was consuming political passion for the people. Thereafter, with the advent of Gopabandhu Das the Congress movement became popular in Orissa. After his death a band of dedicated Congress men, viz., Nilakantha Das, Harekrushna Mahtab, Gopabandhu Choudhury, Nabakrushna Choudhury and others could give a new dimension to the Gandhian programme of Civil Disobedience and Salt Satyagraha. These moments of heroic struggle against the British Government have been faithfully recorded in the contemporary newspapers—the *Samaj*, the *Praja-tantra*, the *Asha*, etc. and the police records on the basis of which Harekrushna Mahtab has compiled the *History of Freedom Movement in Orissa* in 5 volumes. His own autobiography, the district-wise compilation of *Freedom Fighters' Whose Who* in five volumes by Susil Chandra De, the autobiographies of Godavaris Mishra, Nilakantha Das, and Pabitra Mohan Pradhan are significant contributions as source-materials for the history of freedom movement in Orissa. *The Civil Disobedience Inquiry Committee Report* (1922), *the Nehru Committee Report* (1928), *the Orissa State Inquiry Committee Report* (1939) are also rele-

vant for such work. There are some useful files on All India Congress Committee and Indian States Peoples Conference in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library which may also be studied in this connection.

Recently some scholars have completed their Ph.D. dissertations on the history of the freedom movement in Orissa at the sub-regional level. For example, *History of Freedom Movement in Ganjam* by Aiyangar (Berhampur University), *History of Freedom Movement in Sambalpur* by Chittaranjan Mishra (Sambalpur University), *History of Congress Movement* by Purusottam Kar (Utkal University) are excellent works. These works are yet to be published.

Some Important Secondary Sources :

Some secondary published sources, useful for writing of the modern history of Orissa are as follows :

1. Buckland, C. E., *Bengal under the Lieutenant Governors*, 2 vols. (Calcutta, 1901)
2. Choudhury, Sadanand, *Economic History of Colonialism* (New Delhi, 1979)
3. Das, Suryanarayan,
 - i. *Desaprano Madhusudan* (Oriya) (Cuttack, 1971)
 - ii. *Utkalmani Gopabandhu* (Oriya) (Cuttack, 1975)
4. Das, Binod Shankar, *Economic History of Orissa* (Calcutta, 1978)
- 4A. Das, Nabakishore, *Madhusudan Das* (Oriya) (Cuttack, 1951)
5. Dash, S. C., *Gopabandhu Das* (New Delhi, 1976)
6. De, Susil Chandra,
 - i. *Diary of Political Events in Orissa* (Cuttack, 1964)
 - ii. *Trend of Political Events in Orissa* (Cuttack, 1966)
7. Dwivedi, S. N., *August Revolution* (Oriya) (Cuttack, 1972)
- 7A. Jena, K. C., *Socio-Economic Conditions of Orissa* (New Delhi, 1978)
8. Mahapatra, Jadunath, *Orissa, 1936-37 to 1938-39* (Cuttack, 1941)

9. Mahapatra, Baikoli, *Odia Andolanar Itihas* (Oriya) (Cuttack, 1976)
10. Mahtab, Harekrushna, *History of Orissa*, Vol. II (Cuttack, 1960)
11. Mishra, P. K., *Political History of Orissa, 1900-1936* (New Delhi, 1979)
12. Mohanty, Surendra,
 - i. *Madhusudan* (New Delhi, 1971)
 - ii. *Satabdir Surya* (Oriya) (Cuttack)
 - iii. *Kulavruddha* (Oriya) (Cuttack)
13. Mukherjee, Prabhat, Utkal University, *History of Orissa*, Vol. VI (Cuttack, 1964)
- 13A. Nanda, Sukadev, *The Coalitional Politics in Orissa* (New Delhi, 1979)
14. Patnaik, Sudhakar, *Samvad Patraru Odisar Katha* (Oriya) (Cuttack, 1972)
15. Patnaik, Surendra Nath, *Odisare Swadhinata Andolanar Itihas* (Oriya) (Cuttack, 1972)
16. Patnaik, Lalmohan, *Resurrected Orissa* (Calcutta, 1941)
17. Patra, S. C., *Creation of the Province of Orissa* (Calcutta, 1979)
18. Patra, K. M.,
 - i. *Orissa under the East India Company* (New Delhi, 1971)
 - ii. *Orissa State Legislature and Freedom Struggle* (New Delhi, 1979)
19. Ray, B. C., *Foundations of British Orissa* (Allahabad, 1960)
20. Sahu, N. K. (ed.), *A History of Orissa*, 2 vols. (Calcutta, 1956)
21. Sahu & Mishra (ed.), *Madhusudan Das, the Legislator* (Ranchi, 1980)
22. Sahu, Mishra & Sahu, *History of Orissa* (Cuttack, 1980)
23. Samal, J. K., *Orissa under the British Crown* (New Delhi, 1977)
24. Samantarai, Natabar, *History of Oriya Literature* (Oriya) (Bhubaneswar, 1964)
25. Two Bachelors of Arts, *The Oriya Movement* (Calcutta, 1919)

The Orissa Historical Research Journal, The Proceedings of the Orissa History Congress, and The Journal of Orissa History have published some very interesting research papers on the period under review.

Besides the above primary and secondary sources, there are still some original documents lying unutilised in the Record Rooms at Balasore, Cuttack, Sambalpur and Chhatrapur. These records shou'd better be transferred to the Orissa State Archives for easy access to the scholars. The condition prevailing at the Utkal Sahitya Samaj Library at Cuttack is also not very conducive to serious research work. Rare newspapers are lying buried under a thick coating of dust, uncared for. These should also be shifted to the Orissa State Archives for better preservation before they are destroyed by our negligence.

SOURCES OF MODERN ORISSAN HISTORY

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SCHOLARS of Modern Orissan History generally face difficulty in locating the source-materials which are unsystematic, widely-scattered, and sometimes not available. Three main factors are responsible for such difficulty. The shape and size of Political Orissa has been different at different times. Not only it has undergone changes from time to time during the Afghan Mughal and Maratha periods, but it has also faced frequent changes during the British rule (1803-1947). The British Orissa had made a humble beginning as the Province of Cuttack, and then had become the 19th Division of the Bengal Presidency in 1818, consisting of 4 districts and 17 Garjats then known as "Tributary Mahals of Cuttack". When Midnapur was separated in January 1854, there remained only 3 districts and 24 Garjat States. Again when Sambalpur along with 7 Garjat States came from the Central Provinces in 1905, the British Orissa was enlarged to 4 districts and 24 Garjat States. In 1912, Bihar and Orissa cut off their long association with Bengal and became a separate Province, and again in 1936, Orissa emerged as a separate Province. Yet many portions of Orissa remained outside. Throughout the British period almost the whole of southern Orissa remained under the Madras Presidency. For many years some portions of western Orissa remained under Central Provinces. The Tributary Mahals, which became the Feudatory States after 1882, were almost semi-independent States with their ruling Princes and separate Governments. As a result of this whole process, it has become an immensely difficult task to locate the source-materials for the History of Modern Orissa. As a corollary to this fact, foreign rule for

centuries over Orissa since 1571 has increased this difficulty because very often a lot of source-materials were taken away outside Orissa. Many records of Mughal and Maratha periods are, therefore, found at various places of India. Some source-materials on the early European period are located in distant European capitals like Lisbon, the Hague and London. A lot of papers of the British period are there in the British Museum and Commonwealth Relations Office. It is feared that the existence of many such records, scattered all over, have not yet come to notice till now. Also our lack of proper historical sense, as well as indifference in record-keeping, has been the biggest factor for the large-scale destruction of records at various stages.

Since it is not possible to furnish the details of all available sources of Modern Orissan History in this single essay, a humble beginning is made with the limited objective of locating various important sources and briefly outlining their utilities.

Maratha Period (1751-1803)

As for the Maratha period during which the land mass of Orissa in between the Subarnarekha and the Chilka was controlled from Nagpur, Dr. B. C. Ray, for his book *Orissa under Marathas*, has explored many original sources. The public sources for this period are mainly the MSS. records in the India Office Library. Important among them are Bengal Public Consultations (1749-95), Bengal Secret and Political Consultations (1781-1804), Bengal Select Committee Proceedings (1764-69), Bengal Judicial (Civil and Criminal) Consultations (1803-22), Bengal Political Consultations (1781-89), Bengal Revenue Consultations (1803-22), Secret Persian Correspondence in translated form (1792-1803), Letters to and from the Court (1740 onwards), Home Miscellaneous, Orme MSS.—India and Board's Collections. The Wellesley Papers of the British Museum and the Marathi Manuscript Records of *NAI* are other public sources in MSS. form. Among the printed public sources the Calendar of Persian Correspondences, the Selections from the Nagpur Residency Records and the Poona Residency Correspondence are valuable references. The private sources mainly are the Records of Das Mahapatras of Panchetgarh, Records of

Kadam Rasul, Records of the Sebayats of Puri Temple and Correspondences of some Orissan Princes, especially of Mayurbhanj. These records are preserved in the Orissa State Archives. It is believed that the records of the Bhuyan family of Midnapur and the vast loose records under the possession of Puri Jagannath Temple Administration Office are immensely valuable for the purpose. As regards the literary sources of this period, Marathi works of K. R. Gupte, Y. M. Kale, V. B. Rajwade and G. S. Sardesai, and *Madalpanji* in Oriya are noteworthy.

Orissa under East India Company (1803-1857)

For the period called 'British Orissa (1803-1947)' there are plenty of public, private and literary sources in printed or MSS forms mostly at Calcutta, Madras, Patna, Delhi, and several places in Orissa, especially in the OSA, Calcutta has been depository of almost all main sources for the first phase of British Period (1803-1857) because major portions of Political Orissa then was one of 24 Divisions of the Bengal Presidency, and the Governor-General of the Presidency of Fort William who became the Governor-General of India in the Charter Act of 1833, was the Governor of Bengal till 1853. The West Bengal State Archives at Calcutta is the centre of public sources for this period of Orissan history. The main printed public sources here are the Bengal Judicial (Civil And Criminal) Proceedings (1803-57) in 1200 volumes dealing with all sorts of affairs, the Bengal Revenue Proceedings in 600 volumes, Proceedings of the Board of Customs, Salt and Opium on trade, commerce and economic issues; Letters to and from the Court of Directors which refer to valuable policy and administrative decisions; and Bengal Revenue Consultations, etc. These records are systematic, well-preserved and they have their index volumes.

The National Library in Calcutta is in possession of voluminous printed materials which are valuable for the history of Modern Orissa. Among the printed public sources the Parliamentary Papers presented by the Company and various committees to both the Houses of the British Parliament during 1812-57, Selections of papers from the Records of the East India House and the Selections from the Government Records

are important. Scholars observe an unfortunate affair here that the private and literary sources are scanty in comparison with the availability of public sources. Of course the English Factories in India, Diary of Streynsham Master, Publications of the Hakluyt Society and the Asiatic Society throw light on the earliest activities of the European Companies in the Orissan coast and many other aspects. The archives of Goa, Lisbon, Hague are in possession of valuable records on the subject of European trade and settlements. The Tamilnadu State Archives at Madras is rich in possession of records on south Orissa as Ganjam had come under the Madras Presidency since 1766.

Some public sources in printed form in the National Archives of India like Home Miscellaneous Series, India Home Consultations, Papers on Foreign Dept., Secret and Political Consultations, Wellesley Papers, Broughton Papers and Dalhousie Papers are valuable references on Orissa during the period. The National Registers of Private Records give pictures on the private sources. As there was hardly any regular publication of newspapers and journals during this period, the availability of contemporary periodicals except periodical accounts of Baptist Missionary Society is far from satisfactory. Missionary publications like *Gnyanaruna*, *Prabodha Chandrika* and *Arunodaya* are also available in the Srirampur Library.

The OSA is in possession of mostly the MSS. records of the Commissioner of Orissa Division and District Collectorates. The Commissioner Office Preceedings Volumes in MSS. form mainly are the Correspondence in Revenue 181 volumes (1803-63), Judicial 80 volumes (1807-61), Salt 15 volumes (1818-63), Marine 15 volumes (1822-31), Customs 8 volumes (1821-30), more than three lakhs of loose records (1803-1900) almost on all aspects, and 6 volumes (1804-08) and 543 loose records on Puri temple. When the process of their indexing is completed, they would be immensely helpful to the scholars. Among the District Records, the sources on Cuttack and Balasore are plenty. Cuttack Collectorate Records are mainly 338 volumes of revenue (1803-70), 28 volumes of Index to revenue records, 10 volumes of register of registered lands; Correspondence on salt, 60 volumes (1803-70), judicial 116 volumes (1805-70),

treasury 143 volumes (1805-68) and 1068 number of loose records on settlement, sanads and hukumnamas. Among the Balasore Collectorate Records, the Correspondence on revenue 235 volumes (1803-99), salt 54 volumes (1821-61), judicial 131 volumes (1820-90), customs 16 volumes (1819-84), ruidad records 138 volumes (1837-88), and 1538 bundles of loose records are important. Public records on the other districts are comparatively less. Puri District records are altogether missing as they were burnt in 1921. On Ganjam the Press List of Ancient Records in Fort St. George in 37 volumes (1832-1836), 697 volumes of Fort St. George Gazette (1832-1936), 125 number of manuals and reports in printed form and 6047 number of loose records in MSS. form are available. On Mayurbhanj there are 12 volumes of typed copies (1761-1861) and a number of loose records (1660-1906). On Kalahandi the OSA possesses 18 volumes and 357 files of MSS. records (1836-67). As regards the private records in OSA, the more valuable among them, are the loose MSS. Records of Daspalla (1883-85), Records from South Orissan Zamindaries, Tarla and Mohuri ; Kosala Raj family Records from Bolangir in 9 volumes (1159-1935). The literary sources in the OSA are scanty. Here it may be mentioned that most of these records were recently acquired and they are preserved in best possible manner.

Orissa under Crown (1857-1947)

This period may be divided into three phases, viz., 1857-1912, 1912-1936 and 1936-1947 as the years 1912 and 1936 are two dividing lines.

.1857-1912 :

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1857-1912 :

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The public sources in printed form, mainly available in these two institutions, are the Proceedings of the Lt. Governor of Bengal on revenue, judicial, general (political, educational); Administrative Reports of Bengal and Orissa Divisions, Proceedings of Legislative Council of Lt. Governor of Bengal, speeches of M. S. Das, B. N. De and Rajendra Narayan Bhanj Deo. As for the private source-materials, there are large collections of records in printed or MSS. forms. Survival of nearly 50 numbers of periodicals of this period forms a basis of contemporary and literary sources.

The OSA also possesses valuable public sources in printed and MSS. forms for the period. Main printed records are the Annual Reports on the Administration of Bengal Presidency (1860-1915), General Reports on Public Instructions (1848-1906), Land Revenue Administration in the Rural Provinces (1883-1900), Survey and Settlement Reports including Maddox Reports. Among the MSS. records, there are large volumes of Commissioner Office Registers (Issue and Receipt) on revenue (1833-1900), judicial (1833-1900), finance (1879-1900), salt (1853-1900), stamp (1884-1900), licence tax (1880-85), road tax (1871-1900), income tax (1869-1900), excise (1872-97), customs (1871-1900), railway (1891-1900), land registration (1880-1900), irrigation (1863-99), land acquisition (1892-1900), municipal (1883-1900), local self-govt. (1888-1900), vernacular (1883-1900), local fund (1869-1900), court of wards (1879-99) along with 1742 numbers of files (1878-1900) and huge number of loose records. There are some public records on some of the districts. Apart from such records mentioned in the previous phase, other MSS. records are 226 volumes of Sambalpur records (1861-1888) with reference to Surendra Sai, 246 volumes (1856-93) and loose records (1852-98) on Keonjhar, and some old files as well as proceedings volumes (1836-67) on Kalahandi. There are also Annual Administrative Reports on Sundargarh and Proceedings as well as Gazettes on Mayurbhanj in printed form. As regards the private sources, the Dhenkanal Raj Family and Bolangir Raj Family Records, and M. S. Das Records in loose MSS. form are among the valuable possessions of OSA. Similarly

periodicals like *Sambalpur Hitaishini* (1889-1923), *Star of Utkal* (1906 and 1912), *Utkal Dipika* from 1869 onward, *Proceedings of Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1873-1904), *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1873-1904) and *Journal and Proceedings of Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1905-23) are the contemporary and literary sources of the period in the OSA.

1912-1936 :

The next phase, 1912-1936, is an important period of wide awakening and sharp reactions among the people. Therefore a variety of sources and references exist which are widely scattered. *WBSA* and the National Library do not possess much public sources of importance related to Orissa in respect of this period. But they are rich with the vast private and literary sources, especially large collections of the contemporary newspapers and journals which refer very often to the happenings in Orissa. The reason for the absence of public reports on Orissa may be that Bengal in 1912 lost Bihar and Orissa as well as the privilege of having the capital of India on its soil. There are also not many public records on Orissa for this period in the National Archives. Yet the Home Public Series, Home Political Series of the Home Department Records are important public sources in printed form. The Reform Office papers here give valuable references to the formation of Orissa Province. Equally important are the MSS. records on *AICC* and *ISPC* preserved in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. The Patna Archives possesses voluminous Secretariat Records as Patna was the seat of Government of Bihar and Orissa during this period. The OSA's collection of public sources, especially the printed ones, are not less valuable. Important among them are *Proceedings of Legislative Council of Bihar and Orissa* (1912-36), *Annual Reports on the Administration of Bihar and Orissa* (1921-36) and on the *Madras Presidency* (1905-1932), *Proceedings of Madras Legislative Council* with special reference to the works of Sri Biswanath Das, *Proceedings of the Imperial Legislative Assembly* with special reference to the speeches of R. N. Bhanj Deo and Nilakantha Das. The OSA's District Records for this period are

mostly the recent collections. Important among the MSS. records are some old files on Bolangir (1901-48), nearly 1650 files on Sundargarh, and a number of loose records on Mayurbhanj. As regards private source-materials of the period, the *OSA*'s recent collections are the MSS. records on M. S. Das, Gopabandhu Das, Godavarish Mishra, K. C. Gajapati, the Raj families of Dhenkanal and Bolangir, and Parlakemindi Records (1930-34). The *Utkal Dipika* (up to 1933), *Deshakatha* (1930-40), *Nabin* (1930-60) and *BORJ* in 156 volumes are the main contemporary periodicals of the period preserved in the *OSA*.

1936-47 :

For the last phase of British Orissa (1936-47), the source-materials are generally expected to be large as Orissa acquired the status of a Province by 1936. The *NAI* possesses vast public sources including various reports and publications. The National Library, apart from a lot of public sources, is also in possession of many private and literary sources. Indian Annual Registers (1921-47) which mention all sorts of activities in or about Orissa is a very important source. Contemporary newspapers and periodicals like *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (1922-47), the *Hindu* (1922-47), *Asha*, *Samaj* and *Utkal Dipika* provide helpful reference on the happenings in Orissa.

The *OSA* also possesses many printed public sources for this period. The most noteworthy among them are the Proceedings of Legislative Assembly of Orissa in 16 volumes from 1937 onwards and Administrative and Settlement Reports which provide valuable information on all Orissan aspects. Other important public sources are Wavell's Papers, Documents on Lord Mountbatten, Transfer of Power (1942-47) in 4 volumes which deal with important, rare, and secret papers of the Viceroy and the Crown, Sardar Patel's Correspondences which refer to the problems of Orissa. The *OSA*'s collections of the MSS. records on Districts for the period are nearly 900 number of *RDC* files of Sambalpur, and some files on Sundargarh and Bolangir. Although the private and literary sources for this period are not large, the

OSA is making an all-out attempt to collect records from the former ruling families, District and Sub-divisional Offices, political and religious institutions, and some individuals. Important contemporary and literary sources in possession of the OSA for this period are mainly 19 volumes of *Harijan*, *Nabin* (1930-60), and *Deshakatha* (1930-40).

The sources mentioned in these pages are not complete. There may be many which have escaped attention. The vast secondary sources including all sorts of biographies, personal memoranda, Whose Who Compilation Committee Reports (1803-1943) and works of a galaxy of scholars on various aspects of modern Orissan history have not been listed. Apart from these, scholars may find valuable references in the volumes of *OHRJ*, Journals of three Universities, Proceedings of the *IHC*, *OHC*, *IHRC*, *JOC* and *Orissa Review*. The Orissa Secretariat Records during the years 1936-47 are preserved in the Secretariat Record Room and they are yet to be explored. When the vast MSS. records now under the possession of Puri Temple Administration Office, religious institutions at Puri and elsewhere, former ruling chiefs including Parlakemindi, Joypore, Kanika, Darpan, etc. are acquired, the sources of the modern Orissan history would be immensely enriched. And above all, the Oral History is another valuable source.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

- NAI—National Archives of India
- WBSA—West Bengal State Archives
- OSA—Orissa State Archives
- AICC—All India Congress Committee
- ISPC—Indian States Peoples Conference
- OHRJ—Orissa Historical Research Journal
- IHC—Indian History Congress
- OHC—Orissa History Congress

IHRC—Indian Historical Record Commission

JOH—Journal of Orissan History

BORJ—Bihar Orissa Research Journal

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3 • Bengal

Ancient Period

TIBETAN SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT BENGAL

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TIBETAN HISTORICAL LITERATURE can broadly be classified into seven categories, namely. Chronicles (*Lo-rgyus*), Genealogical Historical Works (*r. Gyal-rabs, Jo-arbs, g-Dun-rabs*), Monastic chronicles (*g. Dan-rabs*), History of Incarnations (*Khruns-rabs*), Chronological Treatises (*bs Tan-rtsis*), Histories of Religion (*Chos-'byun*) and Biographical Literature. Among these categories, the *Chos-'byun* series contain useful materials of Indian history, especially of Bengal. It is due to the fact that this series is intended to deal with the history of Buddhism, its origin, development and subsequent ramifications, in which context Bengal under the Pala Kings had a significant part to play.

There are numerous texts in the *Chos-'byun* series, the earliest important one being the one entitled *bDe-par-gsegs-pa'i-gsal-byed-chos-Kyi-'byun-gnas-gsun-rab-rin-po-che'i-mdsod* (briefly, *chos-'byun*) by the famous Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub (1290-1364 A.D.). Composed in 1322 A.D. in 244 folios, it consists of four parts which describe successively (i) general introduction to Buddhism, (ii) history of the appearance of Buddhism and its development in India, (iii) spread of Buddhism in Tibet, and (iv) a systematic catalogue of literature translated into Tibetan. In 1931-32, a complete English translation of its first three parts was published by E. Obermiller.

The next important work is *Deb-ther-snon-po* or the *Blue Annals*. The author of this work is 'Gos-lo-tsa-by-yid-bzan-rtse-ba gShon-nu-dpal' (1392-1481 A.D.). It was composed between

1476 and 1478 A.D. In its subject matter it is primarily the history of Tibetan Buddhism, but it contains some information relating to Buddhism in India. It has been translated into English by G. Roerich in two volumes (Calcutta, 1949-53).

The third important work, if not the most important, from the viewpoint of the Bengal history after Lama Taranatha's *magnum opus* (see below), is the oft-quoted *Phags-yul-rgya-nag-chen-po-bod-den-sog yul-du-dam-pa'i-chos-byun-tshul-dpag-bsam-ljon-bzan* (briefly *dpag-bsam-ljon-bzan* or *Pag-sam-jon-zan*) written in 1748 by Sum-pa-mkhan-po Ye-ses-dpal-byor (1704-1788). Its first part recounts the history of Buddhism in India with special reference to Bengal. The Russian scholar V. P. Vasilev (W. Wassiljew) evaluated this work highly and undertook a translation of the chronological table given in it and of the chapter describing the secular history of Tibet. This translation was, however, never printed. The first and second parts of this text were published by Sarat Chandra Das with translations of selected passages (Calcutta, 1908).

The fourth work is *rGya-gar-chos-'byun* composed in 1608 A.D. by the famous Lama Taranatha, otherwise known as *Kun-dga-snin-po*. This work, indeed valuable for the understanding of the history of Bengal, is entitled *dPal-gyi-byun-gans-dam-pa'i-chos-rin-po-che-'phags-yul-du-ji-ltar-dar-pai-tshul gsal-barston-pa-dgos-'dod-kun-'byun*, but it is better known in Tibetan literature by its short title *Taranathai-rgya-gar-chos-'byun*. It was translated into Russian in 1866 by V. P. Vasilev. In 1868 an edition of its Tibetan original was brought out by A. Schiefner who also had published in 1869 a German translation of the text solely on the basis of Vasilev's Russian rendering. N. Dutt and U. N. Ghoshal published extracts from Schiefner's German translation in English. A complete English translation of Taranatha's *History* made from the Tibetan original, and free from the mistakes done by Vasilev and Schiefner, was brought out by Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya in 1970.

Many other Tibetan texts belonging to the *Chos-'byun* category throw sidelight on the history of Bengal, but they are not as yet been published. So it is better to confine our study of

the Tibetan sources only to the published works described above. All of these works tell about the Pala kings of Bengal because they were all patrons of Buddhism. The Tibetan historians are not, however, unanimous in ascertaining the chronological position of the kings or the major incidents of their reign. According to Bu-ston, Dharmapala built the magnificent monastery at Odantapuri, but according to Taranatha it was founded by either Gopala or Devapala. Curiously enough, the legend related by Bu-ston about the foundation of Odantapuri-*vihara* by Dharmapala is exactly the same as is told by Taranatha about the foundation of a *vihara* at Somapuri in Varendra by Devapala. Though there are occasional differences of this type, the Tibetan narratives contain glimpses of actual historical events carefully culled from different sources and treated in a historical perspective. It was due to the fact that Tibet had political relations with Bengal from about the eighth century A.D. According to the *Chronicles of Ladakh*, the Tibetan king Khri-srong-lde-btsan conquered a considerable portion of northern India and his son Mu-tig-Btsan-po is said to have subdued the Pala king Raja Dharma-dpal or Dharmapala (F. W. Thomas, *Tibetan Literary Texts and Documents*, pp. 272-78). The next important king Ral-pa-can (817-36) is said to have conquered India as far as the Gangasagara or the mouth of the Ganges (Francke, *Antiquities of Tibet*, II, pp. 89-90). How far the Tibetan claims of conquests may be regarded as historical facts, it is difficult to say. But the fact remains that the Tibetan scholars had reasons for getting interest in the history of India in general and Bengal in particular not for the sake of Buddhism only but for that of Tibet's political contacts with this region as well.

The *Pag-sam-jon-zan* of Sumpa-mkhan-po contains interesting informations of different aspects of the Pala rule in Bengal. It refers to a Kam-po-tsa or Kamboja country in the upper and the eastern Lushai hill tracts lying between Burma and Bengal which accounts for the existence of a minor dynasty of the same name, also mentioned in epigraphs, ruling in certain parts of Bengal during the period of the disintegration of the Pala empire. It also throws light on the date of the Turkish conquest of Nadiya. Sumpa has also given interesting information on the

literary and cultural aspects of Bengal. According to him, a Bengali author named Chandragomin or Chandracharya, who settled in Chandradvipa after his exile from Varendra, made a revision of Patanjali's *Mahabhashya*, a grammatical text of antiquity. This is supported by other Tibetan and non-Tibetan sources which refer to Chandragomin as a Buddhist author of great renown. He has given some account of the most extensive Tantric literature of the Pala period written by eminent Buddhist writers. These works are mostly lost in Sanskrit, but are preserved in Tibetan translation in *Bstan-hgyur*. Regarding the identification of Santideva, the confusion that exists between the Mahayanist, author of *Bodhicaryavatara* and *Sikshasamuchchaya* and the well-known Buddhist-Tantric scholar of the same name, Sumpa has offered important clues. He has also furnished important information on Santarakshita, Jetari, Atisa-Dipankara, Vajrasena, Putali, Nagabodhi, Kambala and other celebrated Buddhist teachers. The teachers of the 84 Siddha tradition and those belonging to the Natha school and those of the Sahajiya stream have also been introduced by him. He has also given detailed information on the monasteries of the Pala period. Some light has also been thrown by him on the caste system current in medieval Bengal. The *Pag-sam-jon-zan* has not as yet been fully utilized by scholars and historians. It is encyclopaedic in its rich contents. A careful study of this text is expected to establish a better plinth especially in the case of the socio-cultural history of Bengal.

The most useful Tibetan work throwing significant light on the history of Bengal is Lama Taranatha's *Chos-'byun* composed in 1608 A.D. The main purpose of this work is to give a detailed account of the Buddhist teachers, doctrines and institutions in India and also of the kings under whose patronage, or during whose regime, Buddhism flourished. In this way the work has preserved a considerable amount of Buddhist traditions regarding the political history of Bengal. Taranatha has used the name *Bhangala* which may be taken to denote in a general way southern and eastern Bengal. He has also referred to the territories of Radha, Varendra and Pundravardhana. According

to him eastern India consisted of three parts: Bhangala and Odvisa belonged to the Aparantaka and were called its eastern part. The north-eastern provinces Kamarupa, Tripura and Hasama were called Girivrata. In the north-eastern hill region were the provinces of Nangata Pukham on the sea-coast, Balgu, Rakhang, Hamsavati and the remaining parts of the kingdom of Munjang. Further off were Champa, Kamboja and the rest. All these were called by the general name Koki.

According to Taranatha the Chandra dynasty ruled in Bhangala before the Palas. Kings of this line were Vriksha-chandra, Vigamachandra, Kamachandra, Simhachandra, Balachandra, Vimalachandra (who also ruled over Kamarupa and Tirahuti), Govindachandra and Lalitachandra. The existence of a Chandra dynasty from about the sixth to eighth century A.D., as recorded by Taranatha, has not been corroborated by epigraphical evidence. But evidence of a later Chandra dynasty has been found. Moreover, there are certain inscriptions, coins and Burmese chronicles which testify to the rule of a long line of kings, with names ending in *Chandra*, in the Arakan region as early as the seventh century A.D. and perhaps even earlier. These Chandras might have been the offshoots or collateral branches of the earlier Chandras mentioned by Taranatha.

Taranatha has also referred to the anarchy and turmoil (*matsyanyaya*) in Bengal due to the absence of any central political authority and to the election of Gopala to the throne by the voice of the people. He says that although Gopala commenced his career as a ruler of Bhangala, he conquered Magadha towards the close of his reign. After a reign of 45 years Gopala was succeeded by Devapala who conquered Varendra and ruled for 48 years. Devapala was succeeded by Rasapala who ruled for 12 years. The son of the latter was Dharmapala who ruled for 64 years and subjugated Kamarupa, Tirahuti, Gauda and other countries so that his empire extended from the sea in the east to Delhi in the west and from Jalandhara in the north to the Vindhya in the south. Taranatha's list of successive Pala kings is not correct as the copperplate grants of the Pala kings speak otherwise. But in spite of these lapses, it is a fact that Taranatha had access to some historical texts, now lost to

us, and did not draw purely upon his imagination. Evidently he gathered information from certain old texts, and either these were wrong in many details, or he misunderstood them. But all these do not, however, minimize the importance of the great work of Lama Taranatha.*

* A very important work of the category of the Biographical Literature discovered in the fifties is the biography of a Tibetan monk, Chos-rje-dpal (Dharmasvamin), who came to India and spent two years (1234-36 A.D.) in Bihar. Chos-aje-dpal dictated his experiences in India to his disciple, Chos-dar. This biography contains valuable source-material of contemporary history, and its importance seems to be enhanced by the fact that the period it relates to is hardly illuminated by an account coming from the pen of a non-Muslim writer.

SOURCES OF THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF ANCIENT BENGAL

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I

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE of the pre-Aryan Bengal,¹ as in the rest of India, comprised a number of beliefs and practices such as the worship of Mother-Goddess symbolising the universal fertility power and of the indwelling spirit of different aspects of Nature, belief in soul and its transmigration, magic and incantations and the practice of Yoga. Many of these strains and strands have gone into the making of major Indian religious systems like Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism after the assimilation of the cultures of the pre-Aryans and the Aryans. And in Bengal they are more articulate than in many other parts of India. The reason seems to lie in the fact that this eastern province lay at a distance from the stronghold of the Aryan culture in the Ganga-Yamuna Doab in Uttar Pradesh. However, the excavations at Pandu-Rajar Dhibi in the valley of the Ajay in West Bengal, revealing the existence of a chalcolithic culture have shown, among other things, that the pre-Aryan Bengal was an integral part of the mainstream of Indian culture and the religious life of her people centred round the worship of the Mother-Goddess.

Bengal was one of the last provinces to be Aryanised. The Rigveda, the earliest literary record of the Aryans, does not contain any reference to any people who can be located in Bengal. The earliest mention of one such people, the Pundras, is met with in the *Aitareya Brahmana*, and mention of another such, the Vangas, has been traced to the *Aitareya Aranyaka*. They

are supposed to have been the inhabitants of northern and eastern sectors of the province respectively. The deprecatory manner in which they have been referred to in these texts indicates that during the seventh-sixth centuries B.C., the period of these Vedic works, Bengal was outside the pale of the Aryan culture. The disrespectful attitude of the orthodox Aryans of the Ganga-Yamuna Doab is also apparent in a late text like the *Baudhayana Dharmasutra* (fourth century B.C.) where it is enjoined that a person visiting Pundra and Vanga should have to undergo penance if he would like to return to Aryavarta, the land of the Aryans. It is thus clear from these Vedic texts that the religion of Bengal was for a long time unaffected or uninfluenced by the Vedic religion.

Yet the process of acculturation was on the move and in the course of time Bengal came into contact with the Aryan culture and a fusion of the non-Aryan and Aryan cultures took place. In this process of cultural assimilation Jainism and Buddhism, the protestant offshoots of the Vedic religion, appear to have played a more prominent part than the Vedic religion itself. In fact, the Brahmanical religion, the oriented form of Vedism, did not take firm roots in Bengal before the advent of the Guptas. The materials for the history of these three major religious systems—Brahmanical religion, Buddhism and Jainism are lying embedded in diverse sources in the shape of archaeological remains and literary texts. An attempt has been made in the following pages to show how these sources have enabled us to reconstruct the religious history of Bengal.

II

Consisting of inscriptions, coins, seals and monuments, the archaeological source has strengthened the foundation of the history of different religions which flourished in ancient Bengal. One of the earliest epigraphical records² has been found engraved on the back wall of a cave in the Susunia Hill (Bankura district, West Bengal). Palaeographically assignable to the fourth century A.D., it contains three lines of which the first two lines

are incised below a big wheel with flaming rib and hub, and it mentions the cave as the work of the illustrious *Maharaja Chandravarman*, the lord of Pushkarana; the third line, incised to the right of the wheel, refers to the dedication (of the cave) to Chakrasvamin, which literally means the 'wielder of the discus', i.e., Vishnu. Inscriptions of the Gupta and the post-Gupta periods, found at places like Baigram (Bangladesh), Damodarpur (Bangladesh) and Gunaigarh (Bangladesh), have provided materials relating to different Brahmanical sects as well as Buddhism. The Baigram Copperplate (Gupta Era 128-447-48 A.D.) refers to a gift of land for the purpose of making endowments for defraying the expenses of the 'repair of the temple of Lord Govindasvamin'. One of the Damodarpur Copperplates of the time of Budhagupta speaks of endowments for erecting two temples and store-rooms for the God Kokamukhasvamin (and ?) a *namalingam* (?) in Donga-grama in the summit of the Himalaya (*Himavachhikhara*). Another Damodarpur Copperplate (224 G.E.=543-44 A.D.) alludes to a perpetual endowment by an inhabitant of Ayodhya for making repairs of whatever is broken or torn in the shrine of Bhagavan Svetavarahasvamin in the forest here; Kokamukhasvamin and Svetavarahasvamin of these two plates testify to the prevalence of the worship of Vishnu during the period concerned, while the reference to a *namalingam* suggests that a phallic emblem of Siva with a particular name (perhaps of the devotees the name being unknown) was installed by the side of the images of the afore-said Varaha-Avatara of Vishnu. If so, the fact interestingly demonstrates the catholicity of the Bengalees of those days. In other words, a section of them reserved their veneration for both Vishnu and Siva. The contention receives support from a couple of inscriptions: the Gunaigarh Copperplate of Vainyagupta (188 G.E. = 507-8 A.D.) refers to the worship of Pradyumneshvara, a composite god combining Hari and Hara in the same body; and, another inscription found at Deopara (near the Rajshahi town, Bangladesh) of Vijayasena (circa 1095-1158 A.D.) records the erection by the Sena king of a magnificent temple of the same composite deity. The Gunaigarh Copperplate which describes Vainyagupta as a devotee of Siva (Maheshvara)

records a grant of lands by the Gupta monarch to the Buddhist *Avaivarttika* Sangha of the Mahayana sect of a monastery called *Asramavihara* and also to two other Buddhist *Viharas* in the same locality, one with the name *Rajavihara*. Thus this inscription also reflects the catholic attitude of a sixth-century ruler in eastern Bengal.

A copperplate recently discovered at Fgra (Midnapur district, West Bengal) of Maharajadhiraja Sasanka, who flourished in the early seventh century A.D., shows that the first eminent king of Bengal was a great patron of Saivism; the said inscription calls him *Parama mahesvara*.¹ The Bodhi-Gaya inscription of the twenty-sixth year of the reign of Dharmapala (770-810) refers to the installation of a four-faced image of Mahadeva. Another Pala ruler Narayanapala (c 854-908) was also a supporter of Saivism as is known from his Bhagalpur copperplate inscription. According to it, the Pala ruler constructed a temple with an image of Siva set up therein and made an endowment of lands for its maintenance and daily worship; and that this temple belonged to the Pasupata sect is also clear from its evidence. All copperplate grants of the early Sena rulers like Vijayasena and Vallalasena carry seals with the effigy of Sadasiva, one of the forms of Mahadeva.

The inscription on the pedestal of an image of Sarvani (a form of Gauri) recovered at Deulbari (now in the Comilla district, Bangladesh) states that the statue was gilt with leaves of gold by the queen Prabhavati, wife of Devakhadga of the late seventh century. This king was known to be a Buddhist from the Asrafpur copperplates (near Dacca). A pillar inscription of the reign of Vijayasena, found at Paikore (district Birbhum, West Bengal), reveals the existence of the cult of Manasa, one of the forms of the great goddess. The existence of a temple of Kadambari (a name of Sarasvati or Revati) is proved by the Khalimpur inscription of Dharmapala.

The two other deities of the Brahmanical pantheon, Surya and Ganapati, also received worship from the peoples of ancient Bengal though in comparison with Vishnu, Siva and Devi they were less popular. Inscriptional records alluding to the worship

of these deities are few and far between some of the inscriptions of the Varmanas and the Senas who succeeded the Parama-saugata Pala rulers, call themselves *Santas*, i.e., 'Worshippers of the Sun god'. Some of the images of Surya, found in different parts of Bengal, are inscribed in characters of the relevant periods. One of the interesting specimens of the seated variety (rather rare), now in the Indian Museum, bears on its pedestal an inscription in the twelfth century characters, which describes the Sun-god as the healer of all diseases (*samasta rogamum harita*). The prevalence of worship of Ganapati has also been attested by his images in the main. Two of them bear inscriptions and are datable to the Pala period, one of the reign of Gopala II (c. 940-960), and the other of that of Mahipala I (c. 988-1038 A.D.).

The spirit of religious toleration has always been a characteristic feature of the religious life of Bengal. And this led to the rise of syncretism in the early medieval period as has been amply borne out by a number of images (see below). Inscriptions are also not wanting to testify to the existence of syncretistic cults. The Deopara inscription of the king Vijayasena a devotee of Siva, refers to a temple of Pradyumnesvara and gives a detailed account of the images consecrated within it. It has been suggested that there were in all four images, namely, Pradyumna (a *vyuha* aspect of Vasudeva), Lakshmi, Isvara (Siva) and Sulaaja (Parvati).¹ The Tortoise shell inscriptions,² hailing from Vajrayogini (Dacca district, Bangladesh), more or less of the same period, proclaim the faith of the issuer in both Vasudeva and the Buddha; they not only speak about the rapprochement between the cults of Vishnu and the Buddha, but also associate the Dharma cult with Buddhism and Vaishnavism at the same time.

The epigraphical records of the Gupta and the post Gupta periods refer to the performance of major Vedic sacrifices like the Agnihotra and five Mahayajnas by the Brahmins of different Vedic schools. The Nidhanpur copperplate of Bhaskaravarman of the seventh century A.D. refers to the settlement in Selhet of two hundred and five Brahmanas belonging to various *gotras* and such Vedic schools as *Vajasaneyi*, *Charakya* and *Taittiriya* of the *Yajurveda*, *Chhandogya* of the *Samaveda* and *Pahlevichya* of the

Rigveda. Not only the Brahmanical sects received patronage of the members of the various royal dynasties and affluent persons, but also Brahmanas of different Vedic schools well-versed in Vedic texts were supported by them. The Tipperah Grant of Lokanatha (c. seventh century) refers to a settlement of Brahmanas, versed in the four Vedas, even in the distant region of Tipperah (now Comilla), in the easternmost region of Bengal, which was full of dense forest and where tigers and wild animals roamed at large.⁵ The tendency to honour the Brahmanas of different Vedic schools by the donations of land and other things continued in later periods is well indicated by several epigraphical records of the Pala and Sena periods, as instanced by the Bhubaneswar inscription of Bhatta Bhavadeva, the great Brahmana minister of Harivarman (twelfth century) and the Belava copperplate of Bhojavarman of the Varman dynasty.

Epigraphic records, supplemented by literary evidence (*infra*), testify that Buddhism had penetrated into the heart of Bengal in the reign of Asoka, if not earlier. The *Divyavadana* includes Pundravardhana within the jurisdiction of Madhyadesa, the land *par excellence*, of the Buddhists.⁶ This is not unlikely in view of the fact that Pundravardhana was a part of the Maurya empire, as indicated by Mahasthan stone plaque inscription. Support to this is lent by two votive inscriptions on the railing of the Buddhist Stupa of Sanchi of about the second century B.C. which record the gifts of two inhabitants of Punavardhana (Sanskrit 'Pundravardhana'). A second-third-century inscription from Nagarjunakonda mentions Vanga along with other countries like Kashmir, Gandhara and China as a country with inhabitants converted by the fraternities of monks of Tambapanna (modern Srilanka). Though the purport of the record is not clear, it seems that Vanga was regarded as one of the important centres of Buddhism during the early centuries of the Christian era. That Buddhism was in a flourishing condition in Vanga or East Bengal in the early part of the sixth century A.D. has been proved by another epigraphical record, discovered at Gunaigarh (Comilla district, Bangladesh); this document dated 507-8 A.D. records a grant of lands by Maharajadhiraja Vainyagupta of the Imperial Gupta family to the Buddhist Avaivarttika Sangha of the

Mahayana sect of a monastery called Asramavihara which was dedicated to Arya Avalokitesvara, and also to two other Buddhist viharas in the same locality, one of which was called Rajavihara or Royal vihara.

Two copperplates, discovered at Ashrafpur in the Dacca district, and a short record inscribed on an image of Sarvani, recovered from Deulbari have revealed the existence of a line of Buddhist rulers in Samatata or south-east Bengal having their names ending in *Khadga*. All these Khadga rulers, namely, Khadgodyama, his son Jatakhadga and the latter's son Devakhadga are known to have been devout Buddhists. They ruled in the seventh and the eighth centuries. Similarly, another copperplate, alleged to have been found in the Comilla district (now in the Asiatic Society) informs us about a Buddhist dynasty which ruled in the region of Devapurvata, located in the Mainamati area of the Comilla district.

Numerous epigraphical records right from the time of the first major ruler of the dynasty from Dharmapala till the end of the Pala dynasty, have supplied eloquent testimony to the flourishing state of Buddhism in the Pala empire which embraced major portions of Bengal and Bihar in its heyday. The Pala monarchs described as *Parama-saugata* in these records extended patronage to the religion of Buddha, though at the same time they were not hesitant in their support of other sects (see below).

It is again the inscriptions which disclose the existence of some independent and semi-independent powers like the Devas and the Chandras who flourished during the period of the hegemony of the Palas. And they were all supporters of Buddhism, though like the Palas they were tolerant to other religions. A single copperplate of one Maharajadhiraja Bhavadeva, now in the Asiatic Society, describes him as well as his father, Anandadeva, as *Parama-Saugata*; the family of Bhavadeva ruled around the Comilla region sometime in the eighth century.⁷ Another copperplate, also a solitary one, hailing from Chittagong and palaeographically datable to the ninth century, speaks about three successive members of a Buddhist family, the last being named as Kantideva and styled *Maharajadhiraja* and

Parama-Saugata. But the most renowned of all the Buddhist dynasties was that of the kings whose names end in *Chandra* and who ruled sometime between 825 and 1035, most probably with the Comilla region as the nucleus of their kingdom, and later adding the Bakargunge and Sylhet sectors of East Bengal to it. A copperplate found at Rampal (Dacca district) states that Suvarnachandra (the second member of the family) became a follower of Buddha, thus suggesting that until his time his family was follower of Brahmanism. All the copperplate grants of the Chandras carry the emblem of the *Dharma-chakra* in their seal like that of the Pala monarchs and invocation to the Buddha at the beginning, in addition to the epithet *Parama-Saugata* placed before the names of the kings from Suvarnachandra and thereafter. A single copperplate, found in the vicinity of Comilla, while records a grant of land in favour of a Buddhist monastery built in the city of Pattikera (the name seemingly survives in *Patikera* or *Paitkera*, five miles to the west of Comilla) by Sri Dhali-eba, the chief minister of Ranavankamalla Sri Harikaladeva in A.D. 1220, in the seventeenth year of his reign, throws an interesting sidelight on the later phase of Buddhism in its statement regarding a superior officer of the royal groom (?) as practising the *Sahajadharma* (*sahajadharmasu karmasu*).

Of the few epigraphical records having a bearing on Jainism is a copperplate grant at Paharpur, now in the Rajshahi district of Bangladesh. Dated in the year 159 of the Gupta era (A.D. 478-79), this inscription records the gift of some land by a Brahmana and his wife for the maintenance of the requisites of the worship of Arhats, such as sandals, incense, flowers, lamps, etc. and the construction of a resting place of the vihara of Vatagohali.⁸ This inscription is important not only in the history of Jainism in ancient Bengal, but also in the cultural history of the province in general since it bears an ample testimony to the religious catholicity of the contemporary Bengalees. The evidence of the Paharpur copperplate is in accord with that of an inscription found at Mathura, so far as the flourishing state of Jainism in Bengal is concerned. Of about the second century A.D. the Mathura inscription records the erection of a

Jaina image at the request of a Jaina monk of the Radha country.

Inscriptional records also spell out a spirit of religious toleration that characterised the religious life of ancient Bengal. And it was this spirit which facilitated the growth of religious syncretism (*infra*). In addition to the above-mentioned Paharpur copperplate we may refer to some inscriptions of the Pala age. The Khalimpur copperplate states that Dharmapala granted land for the worship of the images of Nanna-Narayana (a name of Vishnu) housed in a temple (*devakula*). The Manahali grant informs us that Chitramatika, the chief queen of a later king Madanapala (c. 1144-62) regarded it as meritorious to hear the recital of the *Mahabharata*.

Like the epigraphical records, coins and seals have also afforded us a glimpse into the religious condition of ancient Bengal. While coins of the Paramabhagavata Gupta rulers like Kumaragupta I, Skandagupta, Budhagupta and others carrying on them the Vaishnava emblems such as the Garuda-standard have been found in different parts of Bengal,⁹ the coins of Sasanka (seventh century A.D.), the first eminent king of Bengal, testify to his faith in the cult of Siva; these monetary issues bear on their obverse a figure of Siva reclining on his bull. The evidence of these coins is thus in agreement with that of the aforesaid Egra copperplate. Another ruler of lower Bengal, Samacharadeva, who preceded Sasanka also appears to have been a Saiva inasmuch as his coins carry a bull-standard on them. A few coins bearing on them the legend *Jaya* are usually attributed to a king called Jayanaga, known from an inscription;¹⁰ these coins carry on them Chakradhvaja and thus attest to the Vaishnava leanings of the king in question. The prevalence of Saktism in ancient Bengal is also testified to by the coins. The coins of Samacharadeva, Sasanka and Jayanaga bear on their reverse the figure of nimbate Lakshmi seated on a lotus, holding a lotus in her left hand; on a particular class of coins of Sasanka she is seen as having been bathed by two elephants on two sides, thus representing her Gaja-Lakshmi form. On a few coins of Samacharadeva Lakshmi is replaced by Sarasvati, standing with lotus

in each hand and a goose (*hamsa*) near her feet. It may be noted that this is one of the earliest representations of Sarasvati in India.

The glyptic data are also equally valuable. Seals and sealings discovered in different parts of Bengal, such as Rajbadidanga (Murshidabad district), Paharpur, Mainamati (Comilla district, Bangladesh), Mahasthan (Bogra district, Bangladesh), Rajasan (Dacca district, Bangladesh) and places have thrown welcome light on the religious condition of ancient Bengal. Terracotta seals or plaque bearing Vaishnavite creed formula as well as the figure of Vishnu in occasional instances testify to the popularity of Vaishnavism. Some ancient sites like Paharpur, Tiperah, Rajasan near Sabhar (Bangladesh) have yielded terracotta seals which bear figures of Hindu divinities in relief, viz., Vishnu, Lakshmi, Surya, Karttikeya, Parvati, Ganga-Yamuna along with their respective emblems. The seal attached to the Tipperah copperplate inscription of Lokanatha (seventh century) bears in relief the portrait of the goddess Lakshmi or Sri; in it she stands on a lotus-pedestal and is being sprinkled by two elephants from two sides with water. This is the Gaja-Lakshmi motif which occurs on many indigenous coins. Presumably the seals and sealings discovered at the Buddhist sites are affiliated to Buddhism. Many of them have enabled us to ascertain the sites of ancient viharas, such as those of the Raktamrittika of the Indian tradition and Lo-to-mo-chi of Hieun-Tsang, Somapura and Salavana, all of which were notable monastery-cum-educational establishments of ancient Bengal. A terracotta seal of interest and significance for the religious history of Bengal, recovered from the valley of the river Ajay (Burdwan district, West Bengal), bears on it an inscription in the Gupta characters which reads *Namo Vatu Mahesvara*.¹¹ Mention should also be made of painted representations of several Buddhist deities met with in a number of illustrated manuscripts mostly assignable to the Pala period.

The most tangible and concrete evidence of the prevalence of different religious systems and their sub-sects is furnished by images of gods and goddesses as well as monumental remains.

Images of the extant Brahmanical and Buddhist deities, however, do not go beyond the Kushana period. Some of the earliest examples belonging to the first or second century A.D. are affiliated to Vaishnavism and the cult of Surya. An image of Vishnu, hailing from Hankrail (Malda district, West Bengal), depicts the god with four hands carrying a lotus-bud and a conch-shell. Another Vishnu image of about the seventh century has been found at Chaitanpur (Burdwan) and is a unique example, representing the Abhicharika (malevolent) variety of Vishnu images described in the *Vaikhāṇasagāma*, a south Indian Vaishnava text of the eighth-ninth century. Images representing different Avatara forms of Vishnu, such as Varaha, Nara-simha, Trivikrama-Vamana, Rama, Parasurama, Balarama, etc. have been recovered from different parts of Bengal and many of them are now on display in different museums. The images of Surya of the Kushana style discovered at Kumarpur and Niyamatpur (both in the Rajshahi district, Bangladesh), show the god as standing in the company of his attendants like Dandi and Pingala in a chariot of seven horses. Apart from the ring-stones symbolizing the Great Mother Goddess which have been found at places like Khunkrakhopi and Organda in the district of Midnapur,¹² numerous Sakti images have come from different parts of Bengal. They illustrate the various aspects of Devi or Durga, such as Gauri, Sarvani, Manasa, Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Ugratara, Mahishamardini, and Saptamatrika. Among some interesting Devi images mention may be made of the one of Rupavidya, a variety of Chamunda (one of the Saptamatrikas) from Betna near Dinajpur. Similarly, an extremely interesting specimen of Ganapati found at Rampal (near Dacca) and now in the Dacca Museum, shows the God with ten arms and five heads and as seated on a roaring lion instead of his usual rat-mount; this represents the Heramba form of the God and the value of this image is further enhanced by six miniature figures of Ganapati on the top section of its *prabhavali* (aureole) representing the six sub-divisions of the Ganapatya sects, worshippers of the six forms of the deity, namely Maha-, Haridra-, Uchchhishta-, Navanita-, Svarna-, and Santana-Ganapati. Besides these, several other minor deities like Brahma, Skanda-

Karttikeya, Revanta (son of Surya), Navagrahas and Ashtadikpalas have been discovered from different parts of Bengal. The earliest Buddhist image is of the Master himself, found at Biharail (Rajshahi district), it is of the Gupta style and is datable to the first half of the fifth century A.D. The oldest Jain image is still later in date. It is a seated image of Rishabhanatha, discovered at Suhror (Dinajpur district); it has been assigned to the tenth century A.D.

A number of icons representing deities of different pantheons went on increasing from the post-Gupta period onwards. Indeed, the iconography of different pantheons, particularly the Brahmanical and the Buddhist ones, became more complicated and interesting than before. Among the large number of such images mention may be made of a few articulating a distinctive idiom.¹³ A group of Siva-Nataraja images, assignable to the tenth-twelfth centuries, portray the divine dancer as dancing on the back of his bull-mount. Similarly in a few examples, Ganapati is seen dancing on the back of his mount. Such Siva-Nataraja and Ganapati images have not been met with elsewhere and are typical of Bengal. Numerous Buddhist images, found in different parts of Bengal, belong to the Pala and Sena periods and not a few of them are interesting from the iconographical point of view. A number of Jaina images, mainly coming from the West Bengal districts of Bankura, Purulia, Burdwan, Midnapur and Twenty-four Parganas, represent the Jain Tirthankaras, chiefly Parsvanatha and Mahavira.

A significant phenomenon is noticeable in a number of images which demonstrate religious syncretism, which found a congenial home in Bengal.¹⁴ Such syncretistic or composite images are mostly datable to the Pala-Sena period and they include, *inter alia*, representation of Hari-Hara, Ardhanarisvara, Martanda-Bhairava, Vishnu-Lokesvara, Siva-Lokesvara and Surya-Lokesvara. While composite images like Hari-Hara or Ardhanarisvara have been found elsewhere, images illustrating reconciliation between different Brahmanical cults on the one hand and Buddhism on the other, such as Vishnu-Lokesvara, Siva-Lokesvara and Surya-Lokesvara constitute a rare and interesting

feature of the religious life of the early medieval Bengal. In each of these syncretistic icons a small effigy of Buddha is placed on the head of the respective deity, i.e., Vishnu, Siva and Surya. Hinduism also came close to Jainism and this has also been exemplified by some sculpture. Jaina deities like Ambika and Gomedha may be mentioned in this connection; the former is a Jaina adaptation of the Hindu goddess of the same name. An extremely interesting example, included by us in the syncretistic group, seemingly combines Siva and Parvati in a unique manner and is different from the usual Ardhanarisvara type. Recovered from a place near Dacca, the relief shows a well-carved *linga* (half of its upper part), from which emerges the half-length figure of a four-armed goddess with her normal hand in the *dhyana-mudra* and the back right and left hands carrying a rosary and a manuscript respectively; the goddess has been identified as Mahamaya or Tripura-Bhairavi.¹⁵

The architectural examples may also be utilized for writing the religious history of Bengal. Besides the remains of a brick-built Buddhist stupa of about the eighth or early ninth century unearthed at Bharatpur (Burdwan district, West Bengal) as well as a large number of small votive stupas made in brick found in different parts of the undivided province, the remains of the famous Somapuri Vihara of the eighth century occupy a significant place in the annals of the Buddhist art of ancient Bengal. Located at modern Paharpur, the monastery had a magnificent temple at its centre.¹⁶ The shrine was on the second and the last terrace of a terraced structure and architecturally this eminent Buddhist monument belongs to what has been described as *Sarvotabhadra* type of temple in Indian texts on architecture. Incidentally, the influence of the Paharpur temple has been recognised in some south-east Asian monuments such as the Ananda temple at Pagan in Burma, and Chandi-sewu and Chandi-Loro-Jong-Rang of Java. There was also a Jaina monastery at the site of Paharpur in the sixth century A.D., but this was shortly overshadowed by the Somapuri Vihara. A number of temples affiliated to different Brahmanical sects may also be noted in this connection. None of them, however, can

be dated before the eighth century. Among them mention may be made of the eleventh-century Siddhesvara, Sareshvara and Sakhlesvara temples, all in the Bankura district, and connected with Saivism. One wooden bracket, apparently of a pillar supporting the architrave or lintel in a temple, bears on it a figure of Vishnu, seated in *Yogasana* in its central section (it has three sections), thus showing the association of temple with Vishnu.

III

Indian literature right from the *Rigveda* onwards have proved to be an immensely important source of the religious history of India. A study of the Vedic texts, the Epics and the Puranas, the Tantric literature and the Buddhist and the Jaina canonical texts as well as several secular works have provided us enormous materials for the reconstruction of our age-old religious history. But it is not always possible to determine the time and place of the composition of these literary texts. And so far as Bengal is concerned, texts that can be definitely said to have been composed in Bengal are few in number.¹⁷ As a result the texts which have been utilized in rare cases can be said to have specific relevance to the religious condition of ancient Bengal. And again most of them belong to the late Pala and Sena periods. Among these works mention may be made of the two *Ramacharitas*, one by Abhinanda, an inhabitant of Gauda, who flourished in the ninth century and the other by Sandhyakaranandi, who belonged to the twelfth century. Along with them mention is to be made of the *Kavindravachanasamuchchaya*, one of the oldest anthological works in Sanskrit, compiled sometime between the tenth and the twelfth century A.D., Besides a fair number of works of the court-poets of Lakshmanasena (c. 1159-1205) have survived and they have been proved to be useful for writing the religious history, particularly of Vaishnavism of the period concerned. Notable among them are the *Gita Govinda* of Jayadeva, the *Pavanaduta* of Dhoyi, the *Aryasaptasati* of Govardhana, the *Bhagavat-tattva-manjari* of Aniruddha Bhatta,

Brahmanasarvasva and *Mimamsasarvasva* of Halayudha Bhatta and the anthological work called *Saduktikarnamrita* of Sridharadasa. Most of these texts have provided valuable materials for the study of Vaishnavism during the period concerned. For instance, the *GitaGovinda* proves the existence of the Radhakrishna cult, a characteristic feature of Bengal Vaishnavism which reached its apogee in the fifteenth century, as seen in the poems of Chandidasa. The *GitaGovinda* further shows that the ten Avatars of Vishnu earned popularity in Bengal before the twelfth century. Similarly, the *Mimamsasarvasva* of Halayudha Bhatta shows the prevalence of different sects like Samkhya, Yoga, Pancharatra (a form of Vaishnavism), Pasupata (a form of Saivism), Sakya (Buddhism) and Nirgrantha (Jainism). A Saiva canonical text, *Jayadratha Yamala*, gives an account of the *sadhana* (worship) of a large number of aspects of Kali, such as Isanakali, Rakshakali, Viryakali, Prajnakali, Saptaratnakali, Chakresvari, Ghoratara, Yogini-chakra, etc. which also occur in the same text and which originated in mid-India. One of the verses attributed to a poet called Bhasoka, occurring in the *Saduktikarnamrita*, describes Kali as a hungry goddess.^{17a} Another verse composed by Umapatidhara, appearing in the same work, describes this goddess as wearing an animal skin (*ajina-vrita*). Another text pertinent to our discussion is the *Kalika-Purana*, a well-known Sakta Upapurana, which was probably composed in Bengal or in the modern area of Bengal and Assam. The *Kalika-* and the *Devi-Puranas* are useful for studying the history of Saktism and specially Tantrism in Bengal during the eleventh-twelfth century, when they were supposed to have been composed. The *Rajatarangini* (IV. 442) indicates the presence of a temple of Karttikeya at Pundranagara (modern Mahasthan, Bogra district, Bangladesh) in the eighth century A.D., where his worship was accompanied by dance and music.

Indigenous texts have also proved to be a valuable source of the history of Buddhism in Bengal. The *Divyavadana*, a well-known Buddhist text (third-fourth century A.D.), offers us a glimpse into the initial state of Buddhism in the province. It records a tradition in connection with the

Nirgranthas or Jainas that the lay followers (*upasaka*) of Jainism in the city of Pundravardhana (North Bengal) had painted a picture depicting Buddha falling at the feet of Jaina and on hearing this Asoka massacred 18,000 Ajivikas of Pundravardhana on a single day.¹⁸ Though the story is not much reliable, it indicates that Buddhism must have been established in North Bengal at the time of Asoka. This is not unlikely in view of the fact that Pundravardhana was a part of the Maurya empire, as has been known from the Mahasthan stone plaque inscription. Besides, the text in question includes Pundravardhana within the jurisdiction of Madhyadesa, the land *per excellence* of the Buddhists. The *Divyavadana* evidence is further supplemented by an inscription at Nagarjunakonda datable to second or third century A.D. which mentions Vanga along with other countries like Kashmir, Gandhara and China as a country with inhabitants converted by the fraternities of monks of Tambapanna, that is modern Sri-Lanka. Some of the Buddhist texts like the *Nishpannayogavali* of Abhayakara-gupta (eleventh century A.D.) have proved to be an important source of Bengal Buddhism. The author of this book was a Bengalee and he has not only given us materials for the study of the doctrine, but has also offered us a glimpse into the general religious climate of his time. The 'Dharma-dhatuvagisvara Mandala', a section of the *Nishpannayogavali*, reveals that the Hindus and Buddhists in those days were not hesitant to make free borrowals of deities from the pantheon of each other. Some glimpse of the condition of Buddhism in the twelfth-century Bengal is afforded by the *Ramacharita* (III, 7) of Sandhyakaranandi. It refers to the Jagaddala Mahavihara in Varendra, "whose great glory was still more pronounced by the presence of the great (heads of monasteries) and the images of Tara (the Buddhist Goddess)" indicates that the Buddhist monastic establishments flourished till almost the end of the Pala rule. Quite a large number of Sanskrit works composed during the Pala period, or perhaps somewhat earlier, most of which are now lost but are fortunately preserved in *Tstan-hgyur* (see below) have revealed the prevalence of many esoteric practices among the Buddhists, particularly among the Buddhist teachers. Most of the works consist of either *stotras* to divine and semi-divine

beings of Buddhist pantheons or of theurgic texts, sadhanas and vidhis, or of texts of magical ritual. Though most of these theurgic texts represent a queer combination of mysticism, occultism, magic and erotics, they have thrown a flood of light on the Tantric phase of later Buddhism, consisting of three systems, namely, Vajrayana-Tantrayana, Sahajayana and Kalachakrayana. Among a few other texts of importance mention may be made of the *Manjusrimulakalpa*, *Guyha-Samaja tantra*, *Advaya-Vajra-sangraha*, *Sadhana-Mala* (a collection of sadhanas or invocations to different deities), and *Kalachakra tantra* along with its commentary *Vimalaprabha*. The *Charya-Charya-Vinischaya*, the earliest example of Bengali language and literature, datable to a period somewhere between the tenth and the twelfth century, is a valuable source of the history of Sahajayana, an offshoot of Buddhism, which flourished in Bengal during the relevant period. This text contains *gitis* or songs composed by teachers like Kukkuri-Pada, Sabari-Pada, Lui-Pada, and others, who figure in the list of 84 great teachers called Siddhacharyas, embedded in Tibetan literature. With these Siddhacharyas began a somewhat new phase of Bengal Tantrism, since they were connected with popular Tantric cults, especially the Mahamaya, the Yogini Kaula, and the Natha cult, all of which possibly further developed out of Vajrayana and Mantrayana. Apart from the *Charya-Charya-Vinischaya* many other old Bengali texts give us a glimpse into the impact of later Buddhist mysticism on the religious life of medieval Bengal. The folk or quasi-folk religious cults like Bauls and Nathas bear an illustration on this point.¹⁰ Though it is impossible to trace the genesis or systematic developments of such folk cults, it is reasonable to hold that they appeared on the religious scene in some form or other by the end of the thirteenth century.

Some of the early Jaina texts, such as the *Ayaranga Sutta* (Sk. *Acharanga Sutra*), have been found useful for the study of the growth and development of Jainism in Bengal. According to the *Ayaranga Sutta*, Mahavira came to the pathless (*duchchara*) countries of the Ladhas through Vajjabhumi and Subbabhumi, before he attained Enlightenment; Radha roughly corresponds to the Burdwan division of West Bengal, Vajjabhumi or Vajra-

bhumi (Arambagh region) and Subbabhumi (Sk. Suhmabhumi) or Suhmabhumi (Tribeni-Saptagram-Pandua region of the Hooghly district) being parts of the same division. The Jain Master allegedly received very uncharitable treatment from the local people of rude disposition who incited their dogs to bite him and his followers. It thus appears that Jainism initially faced some difficulty in getting a passage in Bengal, but that it eventually succeeded in establishing its sway is indicated by another text named *Brihat-kathakosa* of Harishena (eleventh century A.D.). It states that the celebrated Jaina pontiff Bhadrabahu, the preceptor of Chandragupta Maurya (c. 324-300 B.C.), was the son of a Brahmana of Devakota in Pundravardhana. The prevalence of Jainism in Bengal in the pre-Christian centuries is attested by another canonical text, named *Kalpa-sutra*. It not only alludes to a Jaina sect in Eastern India as Godasagana, named after Godasa, a disciple of Bhadrabahu, but also states that this sect was ultimately divided into four *sakhas* or sub-sects called Kodivarshiya (of Kotivarsha or Bangarh in the Dinajpur district in North Bengal), Tamraliptiya (of Tamralipta or Tamluk in the Midnapur district), Pundravardhaniya (of Pundravardhana, apparently of the Rajshahi-Bogra sector of North Bengal) and Kharvatiya (of Karvata). If Jainism had not obtained a firm footing in Bengal, it would not have witnessed its four offshoots in different parts of Bengal. The occurrence of Vanga and Radha in the list of sixteen Mahajanapadas in the canonical text named *Bhagavati Sutra* attests to the better acquaintance of the Jainas with different territorial divisions of Bengal.

Evidences from foreign texts such as *Fo-ko-ki* of Fa-hien (who visited India during the reign of Chandragupta II [375-412]) and *Si-yu-ki* by Hiuen-Tsang (who was in India during the reign of Harshavardhana [606-47]) provides references to Deva or Hindu (Saiva) temples and followers of Deva in Samo-ta-ta (Samatata), and Pun-na-fa-ta-na (Pundravardhana). As is naturally expected, the accounts of the Chinese Buddhists like Fa-hien, Hiuen-Tsang, Sheng-Chi and I-tsing, particularly Hiuen-Tsang, throw more light on the condition of Buddhism

in Bengal as in other parts in India than on other religious systems. Fa-hien, we are told, stayed in a monastery at Tamralipta (modern Tamluk in the Midnapur district) for two years and wrote out his *sutras* and drew pictures of images. The pilgrim further informs us that there were as many as twenty-two monasteries with resident monks at Tamralipta and thus he provides us with the first definite evidence of a flourishing condition of Buddhism in Bengal in his times. More detailed information about the religion of the Master is purveyed by Hiuen-Tsang who came to Bengal in 637 A.D. The pilgrim noticed twenty Buddhist monasteries and more than three thousand brethren 'in Pundravardhana' and 'more than thirty Buddhist monasteries and above two thousand brethren is Samatata'. Near the capital of Samatata Hiuen-Tsang also noticed Asokan tope and in a monastery near it a dark blue jade image of the Buddha. The Chinese pilgrim further gives details about 'a magnificent Buddhist establishment' situated about three miles to the west of the capital of Pundravardhana. In his words :

"In this monastery which had spacious halls and tall storied chambers were above seven hundred Brethren, all Mahayanists ; it had also many distinguished monks from Eastern India . . . near it was a Asoka tope (stupa) . . . and not far from it was a temple with an image of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara which gave supernatural exhibitions and was consulted by people from far and near."

If one compares Fa-hien's account with that of Hiuen-Tsang he will be led to believe that Buddhism suffered a set-back and was on the decline in course of two centuries. Still Buddhism was in a better condition in Bengal than in other parts of India. Hiuen-Tsang visited as many as five regions, now included in West Bengal and Bangladesh. These are Ka-chu-wen-ki-lo (Kajangala or modern Kankjol, Rajmahal), Pun-na-fa-tan-na (Pundravardhana, North Bengal), San-mo-ta-ta (Samatata or south-east Bengal), Tan-mo-li-ti (Tamralipti or Tamluk), Kie-lo-na-su-fa-la-na (Karnasuvarna).

Sheng-Chi who visited India in the second half of the seventh century, states in his account that the contemporary king

of Samatata was Rajabhatta; in his words, he 'was a fervent worshipper of the Triratna and played the part of a great *upasaka*', and his pious activities included, among other things, 'the taking out of processions in honour of Avalokitesvara at the front and making pious gifts'. The Chinese pilgrim noticed in the city more than four thousand monks and nuns.

I-tsing who visited Tamralipti and stayed there for some time has also left an account which as a source of history of Buddhism in Bengal is valuable. He is known to have learnt Sanskrit and translated at least one Sanskrit text into Chinese. Two other Chinese pilgrims, Ya-Ch'eng-teng and Yao-lin, also stayed at Tamralipti and acquired a commendable knowledge of Sanskrit Buddhist texts. The collective testimony of the Chinese accounts proves Tamralipti to be a major centre of Buddhist studies in Bengal at least from the time of Fa-hien up to the end of the seventh century. Indeed, Buddhism seems to have enjoyed appreciable popularity all over Bengal in the seventh century, if not from an earlier period.

Among the many literary texts containing valuable materials relating to the history of Buddhism during the Pala period mention may be made of the works of Tibetan scholars like Dharmasvamin (thirteenth century) Bu-ston (1290-1364), Lama Taranatha (seventeenth century) and Sum-pa (1740-88), besides several treatises of anonymous and occasionally known authorship. The major importance of the Tibetan literature lies in the wealth of information regarding the Buddhist scholars and the Universities they were associated with during the period under review. Indeed, a large amount of materials regarding scholars like Atisa-Dipankara, Santarakshita and Kamalasila and Universities like Nalanda, Vikramasila, Somapura and Jagaddala are derived from the Tibetan literature. It deserves to be noted here that the Tibetan collections called *Tangyur* and *Kangyur* have preserved many texts in Sanskrit and non-Sanskritic languages which are no longer available in original; the *Tangyur* (or *Botan-hgyur*) collection, for instance, supply us with names of fifty-three works either in Apabhramsa or in Bengali in its most rudimentary form.²⁰ The Tibetan texts are

also of immense importance in tracing the relationship between Eastern India and Tibet in respect of religion and culture. At times a comparison between the Chinese and Tibetan works will be found rewarding. Thus a comparative study of the accounts of Fa-hien, Hiuen-Tsang and Dharmasvamin (Tibetan *Chos-rje-dpal*) will reveal the gradual stages in the decline of Buddhism in India.²¹ The foreign writings are also valuable in getting a glimpse into the conditions of Jainism in ancient Bengal. For instance, Hiuen-Tsang while speaking of the relative strength of different religious sects in Bengal in his time, states that in Pundravardhana and Samatata the Digambara Nirgranthas or the Jainas were 'very numerous'.

IV

The foregoing discussion on the sources of the religious history of Bengal shows that while Bengal formed a part of the mainstream of the Indian religions, it also exhibited some distinctive features. The spirit of toleration, as evidenced by archaeological and literary sources, constitutes a characteristic trait of the religious life of Bengal during the period under review. Such religious catholicity led to the growth of syncretism between different Brahmanical cults as well as between those cults on the one hand and Buddhism or Jainism on the other. Some of the syncretistic iconic types like Vishnu-Lokesvara and Siva-Lokesvara have not been found in other parts of India. Secondly, the wealth of archaeological and literary sources have clearly established the preponderance of Buddhism in the early medieval period and have proved Bengal together with the neighbouring state of Bihar to be the last refuge of the religion of the Master. Indeed, the age of the Pala rulers which covered nearly four centuries, witnessed one of the most glorious periods of the history of Buddhism in India. From the theological and icono-plastic points of view the period of the Palas is extremely important inasmuch as it saw the emergence of three offshoots of Mahayana Buddhism, namely, *Vajrayana*, *Kalachakrayana* and *Sahajayana*. The history of these three systems has been reconstructed on the basis

of a critical assessment of archaeological and particularly literary sources. Literary texts pertaining to later Buddhism are significant for the freedom of thought and the rational spirit which they have exhibited as well as for the information regarding the diffusion of later Buddhism in the neighbouring countries like Nepal and Tibet. Thirdly, archaeological remains like the monument of Paharpur have shown the influence of Indian architectural types on some of the examples of south-east Asian countries like Burma and Java. Finally, though Jainism did not earn as much popularity as Buddhism did, the discovery of a number of Jaina images, particularly in West Bengal, shows that this religion also found its adherents among a section of the Bengalees during the early medieval period. In short, the collective testimony of the archaeological records like inscriptions and monuments and literary texts of different affiliations has enabled us to reconstruct a tolerably good picture of the religious condition of ancient and early medieval Bengal, though a more in-depth study of the relevant records is still a desideratum.

REFERENCES

- ¹ We have taken the word *Bengal* in the sense in which it was used in pre-Partition days and have occasionally used the data relating to some Bengali-speaking areas now included in the neighbouring Indian States of Bihar, Assam and Tripura.
- ² The earliest epigraphical record found in Bengal belongs to the Maurya period. Discovered at Mahasthan in Bogra district, now in Bangladesh, it refers to Pudanagala (Sanskrit *Pundranagara*), which has been identified with its findspot, Mahasthan. The word *Savargiya* has been taken by B. M. Barua as equivalent to *Sadvargiya*, a Buddhist sub-sect. If the view of B. M. Barua is accepted it will be the earliest inscription throwing light on the religious conditions of Bengal.
- ³ *Journal of Ancient Indian History*, XII, 1978-79, p. 133.
- ⁴ N. G. Majumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, III, pp. 42ff. The interpretation of Majumdar has been endorsed by V. S. Pathak in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, XII, No. 1, p. 67.
- ⁵ *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, (L), 1949, pp. 105ff.
- ⁶ The *Madhyadesa* of the Brahmanical tradition, as defined in the

Manusamhita and the *Kavyamimamsa*, was lesser in extent than the Buddhist *Majjhimadesa* (in Pali) and *Madhyadesa* (in Sanskrit). See J. F. Fleet, *The Topographical List of the Brihatsamhita*, edited by Kalyan Kumar Dasgupta, pp. 60-61.

- 7 There was another line of kings with the same name-ending. They were Vaishnavas and ruled in the Chittagong-Comilla region in the late twelfth - early thirteenth century.
- 8 The inscription adds that the *vihara* in question was presided over by the disciple of the Nirgrantha Preceptor (*Nirgrantha-nath-acharya*) Guhanandin belonging to the Panchastupa section (*nikaya*) of Benares. *Vatagohali* is still preserved in the name of the present village, called *Gaalbhita*, where the ruins of the temple have been found.
- 9 Bengal happened to be an integral part of the Gupta empire at least from the time of Kumaragupta I. For details, see R. C. Majumdar, *History of Ancient Bengal*, pp. 38-41.
- 10 An inscription was issued from Karnasuvarna refers to the donation of a village called Vappaghoshavata and is known after the name of this village; it is now in the collection of the Museum at Perth, Australia. Jayanaga has been placed by most scholars after Sasanka.
- 11 The seal is now in the Ashutosh Museum, Calcutta University. See the article of A. K. Sur.
- 12 For these ring-stones, see *Indian Archaeology: A Review*, 1961-62, p. 59. For a discussion on ornamental ring-stones and discs, see J. N. Banerjee, *Development of Hindu Iconography* (Calcutta, 1956), pp. 170-73, 489.
- 13 Kalyan Kumar Dasgupta in a paper presented in a Seminar on the Pala-Sena Art held under the auspices of the Centre of Advanced Study, Calcutta University in 1978 held that an Eastern Indian School of Indian Iconography existed in Pala-Sena period. I am thankful to Dr. Dasgupta for giving me a mimeographed copy of the synopsis of his paper and also for the discussion on this topic which he did with me.
- 14 The present author is engaged in writing a book on the religious syncretism in Eastern India.
- 15 N. K. Bhattasali, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, pp. 192-94.
- 16 For details about this temple and its characteristics, see R. C. Majumdar (ed.), *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 504ff.
- 17 It has been suggested by some scholars that the Vaishnava Pancharatra works like the *Jayakhya Samhita*, *Padmatantra* and *Naradiya Pancharatra* were composed in Bengal and its neighbourhood and are assignable to the pre-Pala period (S. C. Mukherji, *A Study of Vaishnavism in Ancient and Medieval Bengal*, p. 27).

- ^{17a} Kali became the central deity of Bengal Saktism sometime in the seventeenth century.
- ¹⁸ The *Divyavadana* (XXVIII) mentions without any discrimination the names of the Ajivikas and Nirgranthas. Hence P. C. Bagchi suggests that the Ajivikas by the time of Hiuen-Tsang merged with the Nirgranthas and there is no evidence to prove the separate existence of the Ajivikas in ancient Bengal. [R. C. Majumdar (ed.), *History of Bengal*, I, p. 411, fn. 3.]
- ¹⁹ For an account of these cults, see S. B. Dasgupta, *Obscure Religious Cults as Background of Bengali Literature*, Calcutta, 1st ed., 1946, reprint 1976, pp. 157ff, 191ff; K. M. Sen, *Hinduism* (England, 1961), pp. 103ff. For detailed studies of the Bauls and the Nathas, see L. N. Bhattacharyya, *Banglar Baul O Baul Gan*, Calcutta, 1956 and Kalyani Mallik, *Nath Sampradayer Itihas*, Calcutta, 1950. Both these works are in Bengali. Also the paper, 'The Bauls and the Pasupatas' by Kalyan Kumar Dasgupta in *J. N. Banerjee Volume*, Calcutta, 1960, pp. 339-52; in it Dr. Dasgupta has traced a lot of affinities between the Pasupatas and the Bauls and concluded that Saivism, particularly 'Pasupata-Saivism had a distinct contribution towards the growth of the syncretic religious order like the Bauls'.
- ²⁰ Amongst these fifty-three works, Haraprasad Sastri discovered and identified two Dohakoshas of Saraha and Krishna. Dr. Sahidullah succeeded in settling their readings with the help of Tibetan translations in his *Les Chants Mystiques de Kanhu et Saraha*.
- ²¹ Evidence of decline of Buddhism was already on view when Hiuen-Tsang visited India. And during the time of Dharmasvamin Buddhism sank to an insignificant position. For instance, the Tibetan monk records that the Buddhists had put an image of Siva at Vajrasana (Bodhi-Gaya) in front of the Buddha's image in order to protect it from the wrath of the non-Buddhists (G. Roerich, *Biography of Dharmasvamin*, pp. XXXV, 73). This clearly indicates the history of the Brahmanical sects which the Buddhists had to reckon.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

There is no comprehensive history dealing with all the Brahmanical sects as well as Buddhism and Jainism in the forms in which they flourished in ancient Bengal. The *History of Bengal* edited by R. C. Majumdar and published by the Dacca University in 1943 gave a good and systematic coverage to the different religious systems prevailing in ancient Bengal. In 1971 Dr Majumdar published his *History of Ancient Bengal* in which

he condensed the relevant materials contained in the previous work and updated them. Niharranjan Ray in his *Bangalir Itihas: Adiparva* (Calcutta, 1950) discussed the religious history in ancient Bengal against the contemporary social background. There are, however, some commendable and scholarly works devoted to individual religious systems, and most of them published before 1971, figure in the 'Select Bibliography' of Dr. Majumdar's *History of Ancient Bengal*.

Among some important publications, pertinent to our topic, which do not appear in this 'Bibliography', mention may be made of the following :

S. C. Banerji, *Tantra in Bengal* (Calcutta, 1978) ; Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography* (Oxford, 1924 ; second revised and enlarged edition, Calcutta, 1958) and *An Introduction to Buddhist Esoterism* (Oxford, 1932 ; second edition, Varanasi, 1964) ; Sashibhusan Dasgupta, *Some Obscure Religious Cults as Background of Bengali Literature* (Calcutta, 1946, second revised edition under the title 'Obscure Religious Cults', 1962), *An Introduction to Tantric Buddhism* (Calcutta, 1950), *Bharater Saktisadhana O Sakta Sahitya* (Calcutta, 1367 B.S.) and *Sri-Radhar Kramavikas—Darsane O Sahitye* (Calcutta, 1958) ; S. K. De, *Vaisnava Faith and Movement in Bengal* (Calcutta, second edition, 1961) ; S. C. Mukerjee, *A Study of Vaisnavism in Ancient and Mediaeval Bengal* (Calcutta, 1966) ; Gayatri Sen-Majumdar, *Buddhism in Ancient Bengal* (Calcutta, 1982).

In addition to the books on inscriptions, coins and monuments relevant to our topic mentioned in Dr Majumdar's 'Select Bibliography' of his *History of Ancient Bengal*, we can refer to the following :

Ramaranjan Mukherji and S. K. Maity, *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions* (Calcutta, 1967), H. Rashid, 'Mainamati Gold Coins', *Bangladesh Lalit Kala*, I, 1975, Nazimuddin Ahmed, *Mahasthan* (Dacca, 1975), A. K. M. Shamsul Alam, *Mainamati* (Dacca, 1975), Benjamin Rowland, *Art and Architecture of India* (Middlesex, England, 1953).

Medieval Period

SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL BENGAL

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I. NATURE OF SOURCE-MATERIALS IN GENERAL

A. POLITICAL HISTORY

SUBJECT TO the pitfalls of periodisation in history, the medieval history of Bengal is usually regarded to have begun from the Muslim conquest of the region by Ikhtiyar uddin Muhammad ibn Bakhtiyar from the Senas in the beginning of the thirteenth century and lasted till the defeat of Siraj ud daulah by the English East India Company in the middle of the eighteenth century (1757). During this period of roughly 550 years Bengal passed through various political vicissitudes, caused by change of masters, the Turkish sultans of Delhi, independent sultans of Bengal,—Turkish, Hindu, Abyssinian and Afghan,—the Mughals and the independent Nawabs. The conquest of Bengal (1576) by Akbar, followed by the consolidation of Mughal rule under Jahangir was a landmark not only in the history of the Mughal empire but also of Bengal.

But medieval Bengal had neither any Kalhana nor any Ibn Khaldun. It had no special, authoritative, chronological and contemporary political history covering the entire period. The researcher has, therefore, to fall back on his own industry and resources and hunt for materials from different quarters. Some materials throwing light on the background of the Muslim con-

quest will no doubt be found in the chronicles and scattered records of the Hindu rulers, mostly written in Sanskrit.¹ There are, again, only stray references to Bengal in the contemporary histories of the Delhi Sultanate. No specific history of Bengal was written during the rule of independent Bengal sultans. It was only in the time of Jahangir that a noble named Mirza Nathan referred, in his own memoirs, *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*, to the history of Bengal in connection with the imperialistic campaigns of the Mughals in Bengal, Kamrup and Assam, in which he actively participated. Hence this first exclusive history of Bengal was likened by the late Sir Jadunath Sarkar to "an oasis in the desert of historical ignorance". After this, Bengal only got occasional short notices in the different comprehensive histories, composed in the succeeding Mughal period, of which the best known examples are Shihab-ud-din Talish's *Fathiyyah-i-ibriyya* and its continuation. It is only late in the eighteenth century that the famous Patna chronicler Ghulam Hussain Tabatabai devoted in his 3-volume general history of India (1707-82), *Siyar ul Mutakhhharin* ('View of Modern Times', written, 1782), a specially detailed account of Bengal and Oudh affairs from 1738. But this is at the fag end of our period.

Apart from chronicles and memoirs, there are a few extant imperial orders (*farmans*), princely orders (*nishans*), administrative regulations of governors (*parwanahs*), and letters (*ruqaat*) of the Mughal period, which constitute the very basic raw materials of history. The *Muraqaat-i-Hasan* (1655-67) throws light on the actual working of the administrative machinery.

A Muslim state, as medieval Bengal (except for a short period) had been guided, in theory at least, by Islamic Law and jurisprudence and hence works on political theory have to be consulted for proper understanding of the machinery of government and relations of the ruling classes with the subjects.²

The rulers of medieval Bengal had relations, peaceful or war like, with neighbouring regions in different directions,—Jaunpur, Bihar, Orissa, Koch Bihar, Kamrup and Assam. Hence the individual histories of these regions, if available, will throw light on the history of Bengal. Thus the student of the history of

medieval Bengal has to seek his materials, besides Persian, in Oriya, Koch and Assamese sources as well.³

Further, it was during this period that Bengal was penetrated by various European powers and companies,—the Portuguese, the Dutch, the English, the French, the Danes and others. Hence the records of the Portuguese pioneers as well as the factory correspondence of the European companies with their periodical reports, monthly or even more frequently, from different centres, giving exact dates, are of great help in fixing chronology. While these are of primary importance for commercial matters, they throw occasional but valuable light on political events, which had some bearing on economic or commercial affairs.

For four centuries, from the thirteenth to the beginning of the seventeenth century, medieval Bengal was not so fortunate as other parts of India in being frequented by foreign visitors of different nationalities,—adventurers, travellers, merchants, etc. Only two foreign travellers, Ibn Batutath (fourteenth century) and Abdul Latif (1608-09) have left brief accounts of Bengal.⁴ It was only with the commercial penetration of Bengal by the Europeans in the seventeenth century, that foreigners began to throng this region. They belonged to different cross-sections of the society and different intellectual levels. But most of them usually derived their reports about the Mughal court and camp from hearsay, and were given to scandal-mongering. Hence their accounts, particularly of political events, were not dependable. A few, however, are sober and more reliable. When critically studied, they yield valuable data, especially for economic and social matters.

Contemporary literature, Hindu and Muslim, rarely throws incidental light on political history. But this is of supreme value for studying social and cultural history.

Archaeological, epigraphic and numismatic sources,—Sanstrit, Muslim, Koch and Assamese, are of considerable value for studying political history. The coins and inscriptions of rulers constitute authentic sources of information with definite dates which help chronology.

B. SOCIO-CULTURAL HISTORY

No socio-cultural and economic history of medieval Bengal from thirteenth to mid-eighteenth century has yet been written.

A modern historian of medieval Bengal feels the want of a full-fledged social history perhaps more bitterly than the absence of its political history. For while it is possible to weave a tissue of political history after due sifting and interpretation of the scattered tit-bits of information, culled from various sources, no concept of social history was traceable among the contemporary official (or court) chroniclers and non-official (or private) historians. There are, however, a few instances when the authors mentioned some incidental references to social life like food, dress, manners and customs. True, these are isolated, scattered instances. But we have to make the best use of such inchoate approaches of medieval writers to social history for our purpose.

The study of social history in our country is, therefore, much more difficult than that of political history. The conceptualization of social history is posterior to and completely independent of that of political history. Contemporary Muslim historians dwelt on the political and military achievements of sultans, emperors, *wazirs* and *amirs*. They were more concerned with rebellions, wars and conquests than socio-economic history. The early British historians, deriving their materials from the Muslim chronicles, also toed this line as the line of least effort and wrote on political history. A century ago Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya realised the grim truth that British historians' histories of Bengal and the Bengalis were not true histories and sounded a note of strong warning: "What Bengal needs is History, otherwise there is no hope..."⁵ So he asked everyone to write the history of Bengal and sought to popularise history through his historical novels. Truth to tell, however, history-writing is not an easy matter. Even the Indian historians at first merely followed the example of the British and wrote about political history.

For writing social history contemporary Bengali literature is a more important and valuable source than political annals. In fact it is the most important source for socio-cultural history

of Bengal. To get an inkling of correct picture of society it is necessary for the historian to discard the grey, dusty and often gory road of political narratives and bathe in and even dive into the vast ocean-like waters of literature.

C. ECONOMIC HISTORY

The nature of the sources for the economic history of Bengal during the Sultanate period (thirteenth to third quarter of sixteenth century, i.e., till Akbar's conquest of Bengal) and the Mughal period differs in certain important respects. True, for both the periods Persian chronicles, the bed-rock of political events, only yield incidental details, if at all. For the Mughal period, however, *farmans*, *nishans* and *parwanahs*, containing orders at different official levels, are of considerable value. If the *malfuzat* and *maktubat* literature is more prolific during the Sultanate than in the Mughal period, the accounts of foreign travellers and merchants, scanty in number during the previous period, became numerous in the latter.

II. CLASSIFICATION OF SOURCE-MATERIAL, AND III. A CRITICAL REVIEW OF DIFFERENT CATEGORIES THEREOF

Subject to the above discussion the primary sources for the history of medieval Bengal from thirteenth to mid-eighteenth century are classified below : (a) Persian Sources ; (b) Accounts of Foreign Travellers ; (c) European Records ; (d) Numismatic, epigraphic and archaeological sources ; and (e) Contemporary Literature ; (f) Religious and hagiological literature in Persian.

A. PERSIAN SOURCES

These include chronicles, memoirs, works on political theory, *farmans*, *nishans*, *parwanahs*, letters, etc. As these are discussed

separately elsewhere in this volume, these are not mentioned specifically. Suffice it to say that for political history of Bengal during the Turko-Afghan period, all chronicles on the general histories of Hindustan like Hasan Nizami's *Taj-ul-Ma'asir*, Minhaj ud din's *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Ziauddin Barani's *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Isami's *Futuh-us-Salatin*, Shams-i-Siraj 'Afif's *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Yahya's *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi* have to be consulted for authentic information and dates, however scanty these might be. Similarly for the Mughals in Bengal we have to consult (i) the royal autobiographies of Babur and Jahangir; (ii) the Afghan histories of Ni'matullah (*Makhzan-i-Afaghana*), Abbas Sarwani (*Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*), Ahmad Yadgar (*Tarikh-i-Salatin-i-Afaghana* or *Tarikh-i-Shahi*), Abdullah (*Tarikh-i-Daudi*), etc.; (iii) the official Mughal histories of Abul Fazl (*Akbarnamah*, 'Ain-i-Akbari, vol. 2), Abdul Hamid Lahori (*Padishahnamah*, continued by Waris and Salih Kambuh), Muhammad Kazim (*'Alamgirnarah*) and Saqi Mustaid Khan (*Maasir-i-'Alamgiri*), etc.; (iv) The court bulletins (*Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-mu'alla* from 2nd regnal year of Aurangzeb); (v) non-official (or private) histories of Jauhar (*Tazkirat-ul-waq'at*), Nizamuddin Ahmad (*Tabaqat-i-Akbari*), Firishta (*Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi*), etc.

Secondly, there are specific regional histories of Bengal. Chronologically, the first is Amir Khusrau's *Qiran us Sa'dain*, with literary embellishments. The first true historical treatise is by Mirza Nathan entitled 'Shitab Khan' (*Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*). Then come the metrical *Aurangnamah* by 'Haqiri', a Rozbihani follower of Mir Jumla; Shujaite historian Md. M'asum's *Tarikh-i-Shah Shuja'i*; and eyewitness Shihabuddin Ahmad Talish's *Fathiyya-i-'ibriyya* and its continuation or supplement. For the independent Bengal Nawabs (from Alivardi) we have Yusuf Ali's *Ahwal-i-Mahabat Jang*, Karam Ali's *Muzaffarnamah*, Salimullah's *Tarikh-i-Bangalah*, Md. Wafa's *Waqui-i-Fath Bangalah* or *Waqai-i-Mahabat Jang*. All nawabs (from Murshid Quli onwards) are dealt with in Ghulam Husain Salim's *Riyaz-us-Salatin*. But it is "meagre in facts, mostly incorrect in detail and dates and vitiated by loose traditions" (Sarkar). It is a copy of Salimullah's *Tarikh-i-Bangala*, which is more dependable than

the *Riyaz*. The 'greatest historian of later Bengal' is, however, Ghulam Husain Tabatabai, author of *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkharin*.

No imperial, princely or administrative order of the Sultanate period has survived. But there are some of the period of the Great Mughals and of the independent nawabs of Bengal.

Official letter-books are plentiful in Mughal India outside Bengal. But Bengal suffers from a lack of these. Except *Insha-i-Ramchand Munshi*, containing letters from Ja'far Khan (Murshid Quli I) to the Emperors and others and 'Inayetullah's *Ahkam-i-'Alamgiri* (valuable for early career of Murshid Quli), there are about half a dozen correspondence books.⁶ The *Ruqa'at-i-Hasan* or *Muraqu'at-i-Hasan* (by Abul Hasan) deals with Bengal and Orissa (1655-67); the *Insha-i-A'jib* of Md. J'afar has a letter on Aurangzeb's temple destruction in Bengal; the *Mufid-ul-insha* contains letters of the *faujdar* of Kuch Bihar and Rangpur (c. 1700); the *Dastur-ul-insha* (of Bijay Singh Munshi or Vijayram of Lucknow) has letters on Bengal and Bihar (1742-61), compiled, 1769; *Insha-i-Gharib* (or Ujagar Chand Lala 'Ulfat'), letters on Bengal and Bihar (compiled, 1738); *Dastur-ul-insha* of Munshi Shaikh Yar Md. Qalandar has letters on Bengal (1742-57).

As pointed out before, the Persian chronicles are generally silent on socio-economic matters. However, some of these, when scanned for picking out the few incidental references to socio-economic details, will be found to be useful. Barani's *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* refers to Alauddin's price-control. Amir Khusrau mentions betel-chewing. Babur's account of Hindustan and Jahangir's incidental references to social and economic life in their respective memoirs are authoritative and interesting. Abul Fazl's account of Bengal *Subah* in his '*Ain-i-Akbari* throws useful light on socio-economic conditions of Akbar's reign. The references to scholars, divines and philosophers in Badaoni's concluding volume and in Waris's continuation of *Padishahnamah*, when read together critically, will give a fairly good idea of literary and cultural conditions from Akbar to Shahjahan. The account of the Portuguese settlement in Hughli in Abdul Lahori's *Padishahnamah* and Md. Salih Kambuh's '*Amal-i-Salih*'s incidental references give some idea of foreign settlements in that

period. Extracts of *Khulasat-Tawarikh* by Sujan Rai (wr. 1695-99) and *Chahar Gulshan* by Rai Chatar Man Kayeth (wr. 1759), containing statistical, topographical and economic details, have been translated by Sir Jadunath Sarkar in *India of Aurangzib*, 1901. The *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkharin* contains observations on society and economy of Bengal.

B. ACCOUNTS OF FOREIGN TRAVELLERS

The value of foreign travelogues can hardly be exaggerated. As compared to some other regions of India, medieval Bengal was visited by less number of travellers,—adventurers, merchants, ecclesiastics, etc. Again, their number was considerably less during the Sultanate period than in the Mughal period. Coming from different countries, these visitors noted whatever in Indian life, political or social, attracted their attention or curiosity, or struck them as new or unfamiliar, things which would appear to be commonplace to Indian observers or which are likely to be ignored by the latter. This was apparently a gain to the student of history. But it was fraught with the possible danger that the foreigner's interpretations of Indian institutions or customs might be utterly wrong or coloured by their complexes and prejudices, racial or religious. Sometimes, they were misinformed about political developments or court events or court politics, and had no direct information of these. Hence these require to be critically examined before being used for historical purposes. In short, contemporary travelogues may not be of much value for political history, but their value, when duly sifted, cannot be gainsaid as source-materials for social and economic history. In this respect these may be rated, along with European records, next to contemporary literature. The travellers are arranged below according to the country of their origin.

CHINESE :

Several Chinese visited Bengal during the Sultanate period. The best known is Mahuan who came here in the first part of the fifteenth century. Their accounts are extremely valuable for

interesting information regarding socio-cultural matters like language, artists, and economic conditions.⁷

MUSLIMS :

Only two Muslim visitors of Bengal left accounts of the country and these are brief. Ibn Battutah (Batutah), the learned Moroccan traveller, came to Sind in 1333. Sultan Md. Tughlaq appointed him Qazi of Delhi, later had him imprisoned but released him and sent him as ambassador to China (1342).⁸ Abdul Latif of Ahmadabad left an interesting account of north Bengal during the course of his journey from Agra to Ghoraghat (1608-1609).⁹

EUROPEANS :

(a) Portuguese

The earliest Portuguese traveller reporting on Bengal was Duarte Barbosa (1516-17). To him we are indebted not only for the social and economic conditions of the Portuguese but also for interesting details of the lives of respectable Muslims, as well as the economic conditions of contemporary Bengal, especially industries, sea-routes and trade.¹⁰ The account of Joao de Barros¹¹ supplements that of Mahuan and is especially valuable for Bengal's political and geographical conditions of the period. He is corroborated by the seventeenth-century Faria Y Sousa.¹² Another early Portuguese account of Bengal was left by Dom Joao de Leyma (1518) in his *Letters to the King of Portugal, Cochín, etc.*¹³ The description of Hindustan by Eredia de Manuel Godino (1611) contains a few references to Bengal.¹⁴ The account of Bengal, as contained in the *Travels (Itinerario)* of Fray Sebastian Manrique (1629-43), is extremely valuable for its sidelights on socio-economic life of Bengal and its observations on the contemporary social conditions of the Portuguese there.¹⁵

(b) Dutch

Next to the Portuguese came the Dutch to Bengal about 1625 as is generally believed. But nearly four decades ago John

Huyghen Van Linschoten (1583-89)¹⁶ paid a short visit to Chittagong and his account, and specially the description of the social life of the Portuguese, are important. Francisco Pelsaert, originally a factor in the Dutch factory at Agra and later its chief, wrote his reminiscences of his six years' life there (1620-26) as *The Remonstrantie* for the information of his superiors in the Dutch E.I. Company. This gives a brief but valuable account of the industries and trade of Bengal of the time of Jahangir.¹⁷ About the same time Pieter Van Den Broecke wrote his diary at Surat (1620-29).¹⁸

For the first part of the reign of Shahjahan we have the account of the *Empire of the Great Mogol* by Johannes De Laet (1631).¹⁸ But he never visited India and his work is a mere compilation from other works, though a valuable one. Van Twist²⁰ drew an unfavourable picture of the economic conditions in Gujarat (c. 1638) but he too never visited Bengal. On the other hand, Gautier Schouten's (1658-65) account of Bengal is valuable for references to social life.²¹

Early in the reign of Aurangzeb we have the account of an unknown Dutchman accompanying Mir Jumla in his Assam campaign.²²

The account of John Splinter Stavorinus (*Voyage to the East Indies, 1768-71*) is valuable for its reference to several *farmans* obtained by the Dutch,²³ and also for details of economic life in Bengal.

(c) *English :*

Ralph Fitch was the earliest English visitor to Bengal (1583-91) just a few years after its conquest by Akbar, when conditions were still unsettled. His account was that of an eye-witness, but not much detailed.²⁴ For Jahangir's Bengal, too, the accounts left by William Finch (1608-11),²⁵ William Hawkins (1608-13),²⁶ Thomas Coryat (1612-17),²⁷ and the Rev. Edward Terry (1616-19),²⁸ chaplain of Sir Thomas Roe and ambassador of James I to Jahangir (1615-19) are hardly detailed. However, Roe's correspondence²⁹ is extremely valuable for the economic conditions and trade prospects of the province. Among those who waxed eloquent over Bengal goods and pressed for opening over-

land trade with Bengal were Thomas Kerridge, Peter Floris,³⁰ Joseph Salbank³¹ and Thomas Roe.

With the establishment of Mughal peace and with the growing European commercial penetration to Bengal, increasing number of travellers visited, or left accounts of, the province during the reigns of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. Their accounts, however, were not of uniformly high standard. Sir Thomas Herbert (1626-29)³² gave a very confused account of Shahjahan's activities in Bengal. Peter Mundy while visiting Asia (1628-34), came to Bengal in connection with the second English commercial mission and left a valuable account of inter-provincial trade, textile industry, seaports and the Portuguese trade.³³ William Bruton's account (1633) contains a mine of information regarding various aspects of economic life, e.g., agriculture, industries, communications, population, occupations, food and dress of the people, condition of the land, trade of the Portuguese and, last of all, a vivid description of the opening of the English trade in Orissa.³⁴ John Marshall, the E.I. Company's Balasore factor, left a very valuable account of the economic conditions in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, including routes followed by him with distances (1668-72).³⁵ For the regime of Shaista Khan, Thomas Bowrey, a sober writer, left a highly informative account of Bengal's economic conditions and trade.³⁶

French :

The 'great work' of Father Pierre Du Jarric of Toulouse³⁷ is of value about the Jesuit missions (up to 1610) for the close of Akbar's reign and early years of Jahangir. Of the French visitors to Bengal during the reigns of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb two stand out as pre-eminent.—Tavernier, a jeweller (1641-67) and Bernier, a physician (1656-68). Their accounts are highly valuable both for political and socio-economic aspects of medieval India and of Bengal.

Tavernier³⁸ and Bernier both were friends, and they visited Bengal together. The jeweller was indebted to the physician for information relating to his account. Tavernier had relations both with Mir Jumla and Shaista Khan. His observations on social life are interesting and those on roads valuable.

In Bengal Bernier³⁹ visited Rajmahal and Qasimbazar. His observations on industries and commerce of Bengal are extremely valuable. His informants of the fate of Shuja were the Portuguese, the Muslims and the Dutch, then present in Bengal. He had interesting remarks on the reduction of Hughli.

Thevenot⁴⁰ visited India (1666-67). Though he did not actually visit Bengal, he left an account of it throwing light on Bengal's religious and social life and towns.

Italian :

The famous Marco Polo visited south India, but not Bengal. The first to come was Varthema of Bologna (1502-8) who threw light on trade, industry and society of Bengal.⁴² Pietro Della Valle was the second visitor from Italy to come to India (1623). During his approximately four years' stay, he never visited Bengal; but his account of the Portuguese life in western India agreed generally with that given in other Portuguese accounts of Bengal.⁴³

The Venetian traveller, gunner and physician, Niccolao Manucci (1653—d. 1717), wrote the most voluminous travelogue during the medieval period. It is informative and valuable, though it is also full of numerous gossip stories. He stayed in Bengal for a number of years during the interval between the defeat of his former patron Dara and his appointment in the service of Mirza Raja Jai Singh.⁴⁴

Gemelli Carei (1695)⁴⁵ visited the west coast of India (Surat to Goa and a few places in the Krishna-Tungabhadra area) but not Bengal. However, he left highly interesting and accurate impressions about the economic resources of Bengal.

C. EUROPEAN RECORDS

With the coming of the Europeans to India the historian gets the benefit of a totally new and highly valuable source for the study of the country's history. Every foreign power had its individual records, commercial or otherwise, deposited in their archives at home or in India. Such records relating to Bengal

also grew in volume as different European countries, starting from the Portuguese, came to establish trade relations and settlements there. These records are either in mss. or printed.

PORTUGUESE

The first Europeans to come to Bengal (1514) were the Portuguese. Their mss. records are available in Lisbon. Copies of some of these are also available in the Goa Archives, Panaji.

There are four guide-books for the study of Portuguese records relating to Bengal,—F. C. Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, 2 vols.⁴⁶; Campos, *History of the Portuguese in Bengal* (1919); and Whiteway, *The Rise of the Portuguese Power in India*, and Faria Y. Sousa, *The Portuguese Asia or the History of the discovery and conquest of India by the Portuguese*.⁴⁷

ENGLISH

(a) *Mss. Records* :

The *India Office Records* contain records of different categories, (i) records of the Court of Directors; (ii) of the General Committees; (iii) General Correspondence (including Original Correspondence, Despatches to Bengal, Abstract of letters from Coast and Bay, Letters Received); (iv) Factory Records (including Diary and Consultations, Copies of Letters Despatched and Received, e.g., Balasore, Calcutta, Dacca, Hugli, Kashimbazar, Patna, etc.); (v) Marine Records—Ship's logs; (vi) Proceedings (including Bengal Public Consultations, Bengal General Ledgers and Journals); (vii) Home Miscellaneous Series (including List of Adventurers, Private correspondence of Robert Adams, Report of John Taylor on the Dacca Textile Industry).

Similarly there are records in British Museum, Public Records Office, and Bodleian Library, Oxford.⁴⁸

Letters from Bengal to the Court of Directors (of the English E.I. Co.) from 13 Dec., 1703 to 22 Dec., 1748 in India Office Transcripts, National Archives, New Delhi.

(b) *Printed Sources :*

Besides the manuscript sources, there were printed sources also. These include the following :

Letters received by the E.I. Company from its Servants in the East, 1602-17, ed. F. C. Danvers (1602-13) and, W. Foster (1613-17), 6 vols., London, 1896-1902. References to Bengal are very meagre, but valuable as being objective. The Diaries of Streynsham Master (1675-80) and other contemporary papers relating thereto, ed. Sir R. Carnac Temple, 2 vols., Ind. Records Series, London, 1911.

The Diary of Sir William Hedges during his Agency in Bengal as well as voyages out and return overland (1681-87), ed. by R. Barlow and illustrated by extracts from unpublished records by Col. Henry Yule, 3 vols., Hakluyt, 1887-89.

Imperial Records Department : Bengal and Madras papers, 2 vols.—vol. i (1670-88), Preface by A. F. M. Abdul Ali, Calcutta, 1928 ; vol. ii (1688-1757), Calcutta n.d.

The Diary and Consultation Book of Fort St. George, 1684, ed. A. T. Pringle, Madras, 1895.

Records of Fort St. George, including The Diary and Consultation Books, etc. (1672-96, 1910-21).

Fort William - Indian House Correspondence, vol. 1 (1748-56), ed. K. K. Datta, Delhi, 1958 ; vol. 2 (1757-59), ed. H. N. Sinha, Delhi, 1957.

Indian Records with a commercial view of the relations between the British Govt. and the Nawab Nazims of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa—contain documents for the period 1757-1869, London, 1870.

(c) *Printed Selections* from records include :

The English Factories in India, 1618-69, ed. W. Foster, 13 vols., Oxford, 1906-27.

The English Factories in India (New Series), 1670-84, 4 vols. : vols. 1-2, ed. Sir C. Fawcett ; vols. 3-4, ed. Patrick Cadell, Oxford, 1936-55.

A Calendar of Court Minutes of the East India Company, 1635-

79, ed. E. B. Sainsbury, 11 vols., Oxford, 1907-38 (with Introduction by Sir William Foster in vols. 1-8 and by Othewill in vols. 9-11).

Long, J., *Selections from the Unpublished Records of Government, 1748-1767 relating mainly to social conditions of Bengal*, vol. 1, Calcutta, 1869.

Hill, S. C., *Bengal in 1756-57*, 3 vols.

Collections of papers regarding some early incidents (1687-8) in the annals of the E.I. Company, viz.,

- (i) Job Charnock's peace terms with the Moors ;
- (ii) Privileges of the Company in India ; and
- (iii) Disputes between the English and the French E.I. Companies, 1687-8. Copies obtained from the India Office and printed by Sir G. W. Forrest, National Archives, New Delhi, *Farmans, Treaties and Sanads, 1633-1859*.

The Miscellaneous Vol. 1633-1712 contains rotographs of *farmans*, *nishans* and *farwanas* of Shahjahan, Shah Suja and others relating to English trade particularly in Bengal and Orissa with their English translations. The rotographs were obtained from the India Office. These are copies from the additional mss. 24039 of British Museum. Available in the National Archives, New Delhi.

C. R. Wilson, *Old Fort William in Bengal, A Selection of official documents dealing with its history*, 2 vols., London, 1906 : vol. I, Dec., 1686—Jan. 4, 1754 ; vol. II, Jan. 18, 1754 to 1893.

C. R. Wilson, *The Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, 3 vols., 1895-1917. (Pt. 2 of vol. 2, *The Surman Embassy Reprinted*, 1963).

C. R. Wilson, *The English Chiefs at Balasore, 1633-50. Fifth Report*, ed. W. Firminger, 3 vols.

DUTCH

(a) *Mss. Records* at the Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague, e.g., Agra Accounts (1637-39), quoted in Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*.

(b) *Printed :*

Dagh Register 1624-81, i.e., Dutch official journal, Batavia and The Hague; see Moreland, *op. cit.*, collection in National Library, Calcutta, incomplete.

The Hague Transcripts, extracts in Foster, *English Factories in India*, and also in Moreland, *op. cit.*

Records of the Ostend Company, Antwerp

Some idea of the activities of this Company in Bengal may be had from Sukumar Bhattacharya's work.

FRENCH

(a) *Mss. Records of the Archives Nationales, Paris, including Correspondence Generale, 1666-1777.*

Correspondence du Conseil de Chandernagor avec divers, 2 pts., Pondichery.

(b) *Printed :*

Correspondence du Conseil Superieur de Pondichery avec Chandernagor, 1728-53, 3 vols., Pondichery, 1915-19.

Lettres et Conventions, ed. by Martineau, Pondichery, 1911-14.

D. NUMISMATIC, EPIGRAPHIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES

(a) *Numismatic :*

The value of coins as sources of political history,—supplying names, titles, dates of rulers,—is well-known. Their provenance often helps us to know the extent of their dominions. Their weight and purity of the metal constitute an index to the economic conditions of the state, while the engravings thereon sometimes throw light on cultural conditions. As already indicated earlier, coins constitute the sole refuge of the historian of the medieval sultans of Bengal, when no light is thrown by the general histories

of Hindustan. Hence this is the most important source under this section. Unfortunately, the coins of the early periods were crude with marginal clippings of dates. Studies on coinage of Bengal were made more than a century ago by E. Thomas (for Bengal and Delhi) and nearly a century ago by S. Lanepoole (for the Mughal period). N. K. Bhattasali was baffled in deciphering the coins found in India (1922). The coins in British Museum and the India Office are much more complete and legible.

Similarly, inscribed coins throw light on cultural and economic conditions (besides political). Thus the coins of Muhammad of Ghur contain an image of Lakshmi Devi in Devnagari characters.⁴⁹

(b) *Epigraphic* :

Medieval Bengal lacked the wealth and variety of inscriptions which illumined the history of pre-Muslim period. The existing inscriptions in Arabic and Persian, as given in *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, "yield the names of the builders of mosques and *dargahs* (tombs), the dates of construction, and at times the objects thereof". These are of some help in understanding the spread of Islam in the country and social conditions. Further inscriptions (and coins) throw light on socio-political life of Bengal, e.g., the nature of Hussain Shah's sovereignty as illustrated by his titles, the functions of provincial governors and other officers.⁵⁰

(c) *Archaeological* :

Remains of Muslim palaces, mosques, mausoleums of rulers and nobles and *dargahs* of saints supply valuable sidelights on political and socio-religious history. The study of Hindu temples (e.g., *rekha*, *chauchala*, etc.) also throw valuable light on Hindu architecture prevailing during the period, while the inscriptions apart from the light thrown on the art of calligraphy, yield dates of rulers and important events and supply incidental details of political and social history.⁵¹

E. CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

Literature is regarded as the mirror of the society. Contemporary literature may, therefore, be regarded as the most important source of the social history of medieval Bengal. The usual distinction drawn between secular and religious literature is useful. But in those days, the life of the people was virtually dominated in practice by religious sentiments and rituals. Even secular literature like romantic poems had religious undertones. In fact religion pervaded philosophy and literature of all denominations. Of the three classical languages, Sanskrit gradually began to revive from the stunning effects of the Muslim conquest after more than a century during the Iliyas Shahi rule and the short Hindu interlude, and then flourished under the Husain Shahis. But its cultivation was among the educated elites. Again though Arabic was the vehicle of religion of the conquerors and Persian was connected with the court, these two were not understood generally and did not produce any significant literature with impact on the people. Islam in Bengal was culturally isolated during the Sultanate from northern India and outside India. This isolation was broken under the Mughals. Till then, Bengali was the medium of the vast masses of the people including the converted masses. Works were written in that language not only by the Hindus, but by the Muslims and the Christians as well.⁵² It will not, however, be possible, on consideration of space, to list all the literary works. Only the major divisions of contemporary literature with a few representative illustrations under each category will be discussed.

Sanskrit culture was specially associated with two centres, Navadvipa (Nadia) and Ramkeli, and the two aspects of its development during the period were *Smṛiti* and *Navya Nyaya*. The *Smṛiti* works threw light on socio-religious conditions. There were several digest-writers like Shulapani and 'Rayamukuta' Brihaspati, Srinatha, Ramabhadra and Govindananda. But the greatest of them was Raghunandan (of Navadvipa school), author of *Smṛititattva* (of 28 *tattvas*), a sixteenth-century encyclopaedia of socio-religious regulations, written to codify and tighten up the traditional socio-legal system in view of the great social changes

that were then taking place in Bengal. In other words, he illustrated the attitude of the Brahmanas to the complex changes in Hindu life and society. Gopalabhatta also wrote the Vaishnava *Smṛiti* work *Haribhaktivilāsa* (c. 1540). Bengal, at first depending on Mithila for *Nyaya* and *Navya Nyaya*, soon surpassed it. Raghunatha Tarka-shiromani was the real founder of the *Navya Nyaya* school of Navadvīpa (c. first half of sixteenth century).

The earliest biographical works in Sanskrit on Sri Chaitanya by his direct associates in verse, though not objective, illustrate the original form of Navadvīpa school of Vaishnavism,—the *Chaitanya-Charitamṛta* of Murari Gupta (1513-14), the *Chaitanya-Charitamṛta* (1542-43) and *Chaitanya-Chandrodaya* of Paramananda Sen (also called Kavikarnapura). Poems, *chamṣu* and dramas on Radha-Krishna cult give an idea of the socio-cultural life of the country. Vaishnava literature in Bengali is a rich quarry of socio-cultural history of medieval Bengal. The biographies of Chaitanya supply valuable information on the gradual growth of the Chaitanya cult in Navadvīpa tradition.

The earliest examples of romanticism in Bengali literature, understandable only in the Hindi-Awadhi background of Qutban and Jayasi are the poems of Shridhara and Sabirid Khan on *Vidyasundara* and of the Arrakan poet Daulat Kazi on *Sati Mayna O Lor Chandrani* and Alaol on *Padmavati*. The latter's *Sapta Paykar* was inspired by the Persian Nizami's *Haft Paikar*.

The *Paragali Mahabharat* and the *Ashwamedha Parva*, translations of Sanskrit epic literature into Bengali, give incidental information about Husain Shah's conquests in Chittagong and Tippera, which finds corroboration in *Rajamala*.

Coming now to the religious literature of the period, we have first to take up the *Natha* literature. The most famous was the *Gorakṣa Vijaya*, which was connected with *Yoga* and had a profound influence on the life of the people.

The *Sahajīya* literature is another important source of information about social life. Among the early texts were the *Rasakadamba* of Kaviballabha (wr. 1599)⁵³ and three texts (ascribed to the first quarter of seventeenth century)—*Agama*, *Anandabhairava* and *Amritarasavali*.⁵⁴

The *Mangalakavyas* or *Panchalis*, devoted to the worship of

various gods and goddesses, throwing light on the history of the respective cults and reflecting a sort of mutual rivalry for gaining supremacy in popular hearts, are valuable for social history.

(a) *Manasamangala* or Snake cult, e.g., Vijaya Gupta (*Manasamangala*, 1494-95), Vipradas (*Manasa-vijaya*, 1495-96), and Kshemanandaketakadas (mid-seventeenth century).⁵⁵

(b) *Chandimangal* or Chandi cult, e.g., Mukundaram (*Kavikankan Chandi*, wr. sixteenth century) or *Chandimangal* (*Dhanapati Upakhyan*)⁵⁶ has important sidelights on economic history.

(c) *Gangamangal*: Dvija Madhava (end of sixteenth - beginning of seventeenth century).⁵⁷

(d) *Dharmamangal* or Dharma Thakur cult: The *Sunya Purana* of Ramai Pandit and the *Dharmapujavidhan* throw interesting and invaluable light on the Muslim conquests in Bengal, and also on several aspects of life in Bengal; The *Dharmamangal* of Rupnarain Chakravarty (seventeenth century).⁵⁸

(e) *Raimangal* or Rai cult.

(f) *Ghazimangal*: There was a marked absence of any significant Arabic and Persian literature in Bengal during the Sultanate period even on Islam and Sufism. Here the majority of the Muslims, the converts, did not understand these languages. On the other hand, there was a very impressive and interesting 'Islamic Bengali' literature, written by such converts, which threw light on the remarkable socio-cultural rapprochement between the two communities.

The *Shab-i-Miraj* and *Inana-pradipa* of Saiy'd Sultan and the later similar works, the *Yoga Kalandar* and *Inana-sagara* of Ali Riza, clearly indicate the process of transformation in Muslim culture in Bengal. Except the *Shab-i-Miraj*, the others show an intermixture of yogic practices and Islamic mysticism. The nature of this process is illustrated by the Arabic and Persian translations or adaptations of the *Amrita Kunda* (Hauz ul Hayat).

Lastly, poems composed by Muslims with Vaishnava sentiments (who may be called 'Muslim Vaishnavas') also reflected the nature and extent of cultural integration which continued even till the end of eighteenth or beginning of the nineteenth

century. Their perusal without knowing the names of the poets would hardly enable the reader to find out their Muslim origin.⁵⁹

F. RELIGIOUS AND HAGIOLOGICAL LITERATURE IN PERSIAN

Religious and hagiological literature in Persian, dealing with lives of Muslim Sufi saints, their table-talks or discourses (*mafuzat*) and letters (*maktubat*) are essentially non-historical and non-political. But occasionally, they threw incidental light on political history. For socio-economic and cultural history the value of such literature cannot be overemphasized. According to Professor S. H. Askari of Patna, such literature produced in U.P. and Bihar often contained reference to the history of Bengal, political or otherwise.⁶⁰

IV. EXTENT OF THE UTILISATION OF SOURCE-MATERIALS AND FIELDS WHICH REMAIN TO BE COVERED

No history is eternal and sacrosanct. With changing times, discovery of fresh materials and advance of knowledge, history needs to be written and re-written in successive generations even if it is based on an exhaustive use of source-materials and marked by critical spirit and objectivity. It is only rarely that a book on history fulfils these qualities. But then new points of view, new angles of approach naturally crop up, which may render a book liable to revision or entail writing history anew in a sober and dispassionate spirit.

Modern historiography on medieval Bengal has passed through several stages. During its first century which begins with Captain Charles Stewart (1813) and ends with Rakhal Das Banerji and C. R. Wilson in 1917, no historian composed a standard history of Bengal based on a synthetic and critical utilisation of all source-materials. Generally speaking, a scholar depended mostly on one class of source and that too was not com-

prehensive. Stewart's *History of Bengal* from Bakhtiyar to Plassey is political history *par excellence*, but is not very reliable, being mostly based on the defective *Riyaz us Salatin*. A new approach was made towards local history by Sir C. D'oyly (*Antiquities of Dacca*, 1824-30). Edward Thomas utilised coins for the rulers of Bengal (1867) and Delhi (1871). Blochmann based his *Contributions* on inscriptions and coins (1872-75). Ravenshaw's work on 'Gaur' (1878) was primarily based on archaeological and numismatic sources. The only writer to use literature and traditions was Rajani Kanta Chakravarti (1909); but his *Gaurer Itihas* is not strictly a history. Yet it is valuable. This is proved by the fact that it has been pirated without acknowledgement by Abid Ali Khan and edited by Stapleton (1913). Rakhal Das's *Banglar Itihas* (Vol. II) up to 1575 (1917) is "a complete index-volume of Bengal inscriptions and coins, learned dissertations, genealogical lists and extracts from sources known up to the year 1915" (Sarkar). Wilson used the English factory records for his *Early Annals* (1895-1917).

The second phase of the medieval historiography in Bengal (1918-48) was at first also characterised by utilisation of the sources for the production of works on isolated aspects or regional histories. Campos's *History of the Portuguese in Bengal* (1919) based on Portuguese records, is valuable. While its main content is political, it also throws light on the socio-economic life of Mughal Bengal and discusses the contributions of the Portuguese. A scientific biography of Sher Shah (with references to Bengal history), based on *all* classes of sources, was first written by K. R. Qanungo (1921). The first critical and scientific attempt to weave the primary Assamese sources with Persian and numismatic sources was made by Edward Gait (*History of Assam*, 2nd edn., 1926), which throws light on the relations of Bengal with Assam. Sudhindra Nath Bhattacharyya corrected the errors of Gait in his survey of *North-East Frontier Policy of the Mughals* (1929). Surya Kumar Bhuyan's long and devoted studies on the history and culture of Assam also threw light on Bengal's history, particularly in his editions of *Kamrupar Buranji* (1930), *Assam Buranji* (Sukumar Mahanta, 1945) and *Annals of Delhi Padshahate* (1947). Moreland's chapter on Bengal in his *Agra-*

rian System of Moslem India (1929), based on Persian sources is critical and useful. Regional histories were composed on Jessore-Khulna by Satish Chandra Mitra (1922) and Medinipur by J. C. Basu (pt. II, 1939). The crowning achievement of this period was that it witnessed the publication of Jadunath Sarkar's *History of Bengal* (edited), vol. II (1948) from the Muslim conquest of the province to its conquest by the English. It is the first of its kind giving a comprehensive political history of the province. It is at the same time the most authoritative, being based on a synthetic and critical study of all classes of sources,—coins, inscriptions, Persian sources (including general histories of Hindustan, special histories of Bengal, Letters, Pious Legends), Bengali, Assamese, Marathi, and European (Records and Travelers' accounts). At the same time, it briefly analyses the forces at work in the socio-economic life of Mughal Bengal.

Contemporary literature,—Bengali, Sanskrit and 'Islami Bengali', has been used by scholars for different facades of cultural history of medieval Bengal in their own way. As regards social history, Dinesh Chandra Sen's pioneering effort *Vrihat Banga* (vol. II, 1935) is too general to be of value. Tamonash Chandra Das Gupta's work on Bengali society (1935) and J. N. Das Gupta's on economy of seventeenth-century Bengal are useful as collections of data. Sukumar Sen has given a valuable scientific picture of society in *Madhyajuge Bangla O Bangali* (1945), but it is very brief.

The work of writing a literary history of Bengal had already started during the first period by Dinesh Chandra Sen in his successive pioneering works, *History of Bengali Language and Literature* (1911), *Banga Sahitya Parichaya or Typical Selections from old Bengali Literature*, 2 vols., 1914, and *Vaishnava Literature of Medieval Bengal*, 1917. He continued his unflagging efforts, during the second period, in *Folk Literature of Bengal* (1920), *Bangla Sahityer Itihas* (1940), and *Banga Bhasha O Sahitya* (1st edn., 1896; 8th edn., B.S. 1356 or 1948-9). Sukumar Sen was the next to contribute to literary history in his *A History of Brajabuli Literature* (1935) and *Bangla Sahityer Itihas*, vol. I (B.S. 1347 or 1940/1959-63). We get some idea of social conditions and tendencies current in medieval Bengal

from these two writers. Ashutosh Bhattacharya wrote *Bangla Mangal Kavyer Itihas* (B.S. 1357/1950). The Muslim poets of Bengal and social life of the Muslims in the seventeenth century have been studied by Enamul Huq and A. Karim on the basis of unpublished manuscripts (*Arakan Rajsabhai V'angla Sahitya*, 1935).

As regards religious sects, the example of writing several works on Vaishnavism in its different aspects, began as early as 1913 by Jadunath Sarkar (*Chaitanya's Pilgrimages and Teachings*, being a translation of *Madhya Lila* of *Chaitanya Charitamrita* of Krishnadas Kaviraj) and Dinesh Chandra Sen (*Chaitanya and His Companions*, 1917) was continued during this period by M. T. Kennedy (*The Chaitanya Movement in Bengal*, 1925), Biman Bihari Majumdar (*Chaitanya Chariter Upadan*, 1939), and Sushil Kumar De (*Early History of Vaishnava Faith and Movement in Bengal*, 1942). The post-Chaitanya Sahitya cult was taken up by M. M. Basu (1930), and obscure religious cults by S. B. Das Gupta (1946); while P. C. Bagchi gave us the benefit of his *Studies in Tantras* (1939). Enamul Huq discussed the influence of the Sufis on Bengal (*Bange Sufi Probhava*, 1935) and the state of Islam in East Pakistan, *Purva Pakistane Islam* (1948).

Historiography on medieval Bengal reached its meridian splendour, based on a comprehensive and synthetic use of all sources including Persian, with the publication of *History of Bengal*, vol. II (1948), edited by Sarkar. Then at once began a period of dusk, characterised by decline of Persian scholarship during the third period of that historiography. The partition of India had its effect on the standard of Persian scholarship in India. With the departure of distinguished Persian scholars to the two wings of Pakistan, the study of medieval Indian history, demanding knowledge of Persian, visibly declined both in University circles and outside. Not only does a psychology of uncertainty haunt the minds of our young hopefuls in learning Persian for historical purposes, even the specialised study of medieval India in some Universities has been relegated to the background, if not altogether stopped.

However, a few works, though published after 1948, repre-

sented an overflow of the previous period. Among these may be mentioned the present writer's *Mir Jumla* (1951/1979), who served as the Governor of Bengal (1660-63) and conquered Kuch Bihar and Assam, utilising different classes of sources,—Persian, Assamese and Koch chronicles, accounts of foreign travellers, European factory records, coins, inscriptions and buildings, etc.

But if the sun of Persian scholarship set, the faint mark of the moon of socio-cultural history became visible on the firmament of historiography on medieval Bengal. During this period, several works came to be written by utilising the sources on literature, society and religion. Tapankumar Ray Chaudhuri's *Bengal under Akbar and Jahangir* (1953) is an introductory account of the social life in Bengal during the first half-century of Mughal rule. Enamul Haq discussed *Muslim Bangla Sahitya* (Dacca, 1955; Karachi, 1957). Sukhamoy Mukhopadhyaya wrote *Prachin Bangla Sahityer Kalakarma* (1958). Abdul Karim (of erstwhile East Pakistan) wrote the *Social History of the Muslims of Bengal, down to A.D. 1538* (Dacca, 1959). The transformation of Islam in Bengal—its political background, and the various socio-economic factors responsible for it, and the revivalist movements till the end of the nineteenth century—has been the theme of *Islam in Bengal* by the present writer (first as a chapter of *History of Bengal*, ed. by N. K. Sinha, Calcutta University, 1967, and then with some additions and bibliography separately in 1972). Amalendu De traced *Roots of Separatism in Nineteenth Century Bengal* (1974) to the medieval period.

Notwithstanding this growing historiography, there are still several gaps that remain to be filled up. Sir Jadunath Sarkar's lament (1948) still holds good today: "... the Muslim period, except for a few reigns still remains unexplored ground, and we are still encompassed by almost the same mist of tradition and the deceptive light of pious frauds, which baffled Captain Charles Stewart... 130 years ago. Even the chronology of many of the early Muslim rulers of Bengal is still unsettled, as their coins are so few and so badly executed that their dates cannot be read with certainty." However, the light of modern research has fallen on some of the many doubtful points in the articles of

different journals. But these have not been incorporated in standard books yet. This has to be done. My other humble suggestions for filling up gaps are given below :

A. *Political History*

1. Study of the physical and political geography of Bengal, — changes in courses of rivers and land routes ; and the changing frontiers of Bengal from the time of Bakhtiyar's initial conquest.
2. Foreign Policy, if any, — Relations with neighbouring kingdoms and peoples : eastern frontier, — with Kuch Bihar, Kamrup and Assam ; South-east, — Arakan and Pegu ; South-west, with Orissa ; West, — Bihar and Jaunpur ; North, — hill states : Bhutan, Tibet, Nepal.
3. Administrative history and organization.
4. Military and Naval history and organization.

B. *Social History*

Social history has a wide and varied content. According to Trevelyan it implies the daily life of the people in the past and includes "the human as well as the economic relation of different classes to one another, the character of family and household life, the conditions of labour and of leisure, the attitude of man to nature, the culture of each age as it arose out of these general conditions of life, and took ever-changing forms in religion, literature and music, architecture, learning and thought". Social history may be studied, as far as possible, according to the above specifications. But new vistas may be revealed by our source-materials and this may entail additional items of information. For the sake of convenience this may be studied in two parts not in a static but diachronic manner, — up to the Mughal conquest (1575) of Bengal or its complete subjugation by Islam Khan in the beginning of the seventeenth century under Jahangir ; and during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In studying this topic, individual social life of the different communities, — Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and the Europeans, the Portuguese, Dutch, English, French and others may be discussed. One very important aspect of social history that must be discussed in depth

is Hindu-Muslim relations throughout the period, showing the nature and extent of cultural integration.

C. *Economic History*

Sir Jadunath Sarkar's lament (in 1948) in respect of economic history has not been wiped out yet. Tapan Kumar Ray Chaudhury's *Bengal under Akbar and Jahangir* (1953) was a good beginning, but this was not continued. The present writer ardently believes that it is possible to write a scientific account of the economy of medieval Bengal on the basis of available materials (as in *Glimpses of Medieval Bihar Economy* by the writer of this essay, 1978). In this respect Bengal has an advantage in the greater abundance of her European factory records as compared to her western neighbour. This study should be made from the point of view of Bengal and not from that of the Europeans.

The study of economic penetration of Bengal by the foreigners has been referred to in standard reference books. But the writer of this essay feels that this needs further study and research as regards their motivations and methods, with a view to finding out the response of the rulers of Bengal (i.e., the Mughals) and the trends of their policy, its wisdom and its pitfalls.

D. *Religious History*

Considerable spade-work has been done by scholars in their studies of various religious systems in medieval Bengal. Hence a time has now come to weave the different religious trends in a scientific and compact manner, showing the inter-relation between religion, society and politics. It is thus possible to study not only the religious life of the different systems,—Buddhism, Tantricism, Nathism, Brahmanism, Vaishnavism, different popular cults (e.g., Manasa, Chandi, Dharma, etc.), Islam and Christianity,—but also to examine their mutual relations. As in the cases of society, this may conveniently be done in two sections, pre-Mughal and Mughal, but the evolutionary aspect should be kept in mind.

Society and Religion are closely linked with traditions and

folk-lore. Manuscripts of popular Hindu and Muslim traditions, *panchalis* and *kissas* (*kechcha-kahini*), bear witness to the mutual give and take between the two communities. But all these have not been fully salvaged from their hidden refuges or fully studied. This is a desideratum for research on social history of medieval Bengal. Again, all centres of religious worship or sanctity of the two communities (e.g., *pithasthanas* of the Hindus, the sites of mosques, tombs or *dargahs* of saints, etc. of the Muslims, Sufi centres) were associated with their religious evolution. All these have not been adequately traced or studied. For reconstruction of the social history of Bengal, therefore, it is incumbent on the researcher to undertake a preliminary reconnaissance and discovery of both these primary sources—literary traditions and folk-lore and topographical sites of both communities. Again, since many holy places of the Muslims were originally Hindu or Buddhist, a comprehensive and minute critical analysis of mosques, graveyards and *dargahs* of Muslim divines,—their history, art history, architectural style—will yield valuable data of socio-religious history of medieval Bengal. Sometimes, the holy places of one community were also considered holy by the other. Hence the uses to which these were put by the members of the two communities would indicate the degree of social and religious integration.

E. *Application of Literature to the service of Clio*

Contemporary Bengali language and literature have been fully studied by bands of scholars, foreign and Indian, for nearly two hundred years. But our historians have not utilised the literary source adequately, if at all. The volumes of *Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Series*, relating to medieval Bengal, edited by the renowned R. C. Majumdar and his own single-volume *History of Medieval Bengal* have no doubt chapters and sections on Bengali language and literature. Occasionally, literary evidence has also been used for alluding to some political events or socio-economic conditions. But this source has not been thoroughly ransacked for historical purposes, especially for the reconstruction of the social and cultural history of medieval Bengal. A fine sample of the wealth of materials hidden in Bengali liter-

ature and the immense possibilities of research on social history is given by Sukumar Sen in his extremely small but highly scientific book, *Madhya Juger Bangla O Bangali* (1945). The line of enquiry needs to be further worked up.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- ¹ For pre-Muslim Bengal, see R. C. Majumdar, ed. *Hist. Bengal*, vol. 1. Besides epigraphic and numismatic evidence, there are literary sources (e.g., *Ramacharitamansa* of Sandhyakara Nandi) and foreign travellers' accounts like (a) the contemporary account of Dharmaswamin, *Biography of Dharmaswamin* by G. Roerich, and edited by A. S. Altekar, KPJRI, Patna, and (b) the later account of Taranath.

- ² For *Baharistan i Ghaibi* and *Muraquat i Hasan* see under Persian sources.

Acc. to A. Karim (*Social History of the Muslim in Bengal*, 73ff), a student of Sharfuddin Abu Tawwamah wrote a book in Bengali on *figh* (*Nam i Haq*). This has been challenged by A. B. M. Habibullah on the ground that the evidence is not strong (*Jour. Asiatic Society, 'Pakistan'*, V, 1960, p. 214).

Among general works on political theory, may be mentioned works of Abu Hanifa and others. Mawardi, *Akham-us-Sultaniyah*, Cario ed.

- ³ *Oriya Madla Panji*: See R. D. Banerji, *Hist. of Orissa*, 2 vols.

Among Koch chronicles may be mentioned: (i) the metrical *Darrang Raj Bansabali* by Surya Khari Daibajna, ed. by Pandit Hem Chandra Goswami and published by Assam Government (1917). Gait's abstract tran. in *JASB*, 1893. (ii) *Rajopakhyan* by Munshi Jadu Nath Ghosh, tr. by Rev. Robinson. (Rare. One copy in National Library, which I have used.)

The *Ahom and Assamese Buranjis* are either published under the auspices of Directorate of Hist. and Antiquarian Studies, and Kamrup Anusandhan Samiti and some are found in American Baptist Mission Press, Gauhati. Some are mentioned by Gait in his *Report on the Progress of Historical Research in Assam*. Since then S. K. Bhuyan has edited a large number of Ahom and Assamese Buranjis, the entire list of which is not reproduced here. Only a few are noted below.

- (i) *Ahom Buranji from Khunlung and Khunlai* (MS. Eng. Tr.,

DHAS); (ii) *Ahom Buranji*, ed. and tr. by G. C. Barua, (iii) *Purani Asam Buranji* or *Buranji from Sukapha to Gadadhar Singh*, ed. by Hem Chandra Goswami; (iv) *Asam Buranji* found in the family of Sukumar Mahanta.

A detailed list will be found in my *Mir Jumla* (2nd edn., 1979) and in books of S. K. Bhuyan like *Atan Burhagohain and His Times*. See the volume on 'Sources on History of Medieval Assam', published by the Institute of Historical Studies.

Tripura (Tippera): *Rajamala*, Vangiya Sahitya Parishat Ms. (no. 2259), ed. by Kali Prasanna Sen.

- ⁴ For Ibn Battutah and Abdul Latif see under 'Foreign Travellers', fn. no. 8

Besides these two we have the letter of a Jesuit traveller, Stephen Cacella who was accompanied by another Jesuit during their visit to Dacca, Koch Bihar and Pandu. Cacella visited Pandu when Raja Satrajit of Bhusna was its *thanahdar*. The letter is quoted in C Wessel's *Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia* and throws light on Bengal's relations with the Koches and Mughal Kamrup towards the end of Jahangir's reign.

- ⁵ বঙ্গবন্ধু চট্টোপাধ্যায়, 'বঙ্গলায় ইতিহাস লিপ্যন্তর করিতে কথ', 'বঙ্গদর্শন', অগ্রহায়ণ, ১২৮৭; 'বঙ্গ ব্রাহ্মণ্যধিকার', ঐ, ভাদ্র, ১২৮০; 'বঙ্গালীর বাহুল্য', ঐ, আশ্বিন, ১২৮১।

- ⁶ These are mentioned in Sarkar's *Hist. of Bengal*, vol. ii, p. 506, with contents thereof.

- ⁷ For social and economic conditions of medieval Bengal references must be made to the *Chinese Annals*, Eng. tr. by Probodh Chandra Bagchi in *Viswa Bharati Annals*, vol. 1, 1945, pp. 117-27.

(a) Mahuan's Account: *Ying Yai sheng lan*, Eng. Tr. as 'Kingdom of Bengala' by George Philip JRAS, 1895. See also J. J. L. Duyvendak, *Ma Huan re-examined*, Amsterdam, 1933.

(b) *Si Yang Ch'ao Kunqientu*, compiled by Huang sing Ts'eng (1520).

(c) *Sing Ch'a sheng lan*, compiled by Feisin (1436).

(d) *Shu Yu Chou tseu lu*, compiled by Yen Ts'eng Kien (1574).

(e) *Sing Chao Tien lu*.

(f) *Tao Yi che leo*, compiled by Wang Ta-Yuan (fourteenth century).

W. W. Rockhill translated portions from (a), (b), (c) and (f) relating to coasts of India, *Toung Pao*, xvi, 1915, 436ff.

- ⁸ *Kitab ur Rahlab* (in Arabic); E and D. iii (partial translation only), Text and Fr. trans. by Defremery and Sanguinetti (*Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah*), Paris, 1922, vol. iv (account of Bengal), Eng. trans. *Ibn Battuta* (Broadway Travellers Series, London, 1929; also, H. Gibb, *Hakhyt*, Camb., 1958 (*The Travels of Ibn Battuta*), ed. and tr. by Agha Mahdi Husain as the *Rehla* of Ibn Battuta, GOS, Baroda, 1953.

- ⁹ Son of Abdullah Abbasi of Ahmadabad, Latif was a retainer of Khwajah Abul Hasan (later Asaf Khan), apptd. *diwan* of Bengal (1608). Journey from Ahmadabad to Agra (Dec., 1607—March, 1608), and that from Agra to Bengal (8 April, 1608—15 Oct., 1609), when his diary ended abruptly.
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- ¹⁰ For the Portuguese, see J. B. Harrison, 'Five Portuguese Historians', in C. H. Philips, ed. *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*. Duarte Barbosa, Bivro de, *The Book of 2 vols.*, tr. by M. L. Dames, *Hakluyt Soc.*, London, 1918, 1921.
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- ¹² Souza, Faria Y, *The Portuguese Asia*, vol. I, Eng. tr. by Stevens, London, 1695.
- ¹³ Eng. tr. by S. N. Sen, 'An Early Portuguese Account of Bengal', *Cal. Review*, LXVI (March, 1938).
- ¹⁴ The full title of Godino's essay is 'Description of Hindustan and Guzarate', ed. and tr. by Rev. H. Hosten, *JRASB*, Letter iv, 1938.
- ¹⁵ Manrique, *Itinerario* (1649), 2 vols., ed. C. Eford Luard, assisted by Father H. Hosten (*Hakluyt*), Oxf., 1927, vol. II deals with India. Partial transl. by E. Maclagan in *Journal of Punjab. Hist. Soc.*, 1911, vol. I, pp. 83, 151.
- ¹⁶ *The Voyage of... to the East Indies*, vol. I, tr. by Arthur Coke Burnell, *Hakluyt*, MDCCCLXCV, vol. II, P. A. Tiele, London, 1885.
- ¹⁷ Translated into English as *Jahangir's India* by W. H. Moreland and P. Geyl, Cambridge, 1925 (Reprint). A French trans. is included in a book published by Thevenot, Paris, 1663.
- ¹⁸ *The Diary of... at Surat* (1620-29), tr. by W. H. Moreland in *JIH*, x (1931).
- ¹⁹ *De Imperio Magni Mogolis... congestus*, Leydon, 1631, tr. by J. S. Hoyland and annotated by S. N. Bannerjee, Bombay, 1928.
- ²⁰ A senior Dutch merchant in Ahmadabad, Cambay, Broach and Baroda, in thirties of seventeenth-century Report, Batavia dated 1638, Amsterdam, 1648.
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- ²³ Tr. from the Dutch by S. H. Wilcocke, 3 vols., London, 1798.
- ²⁴ Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, vol. x, Glasgow, 1905 (for Caesar Fredericke & R. Fitch. Ralph Fitch : *Hakluyt*, London, 1698 ; ed. J. H. Ryley, *Ralph Fitch, England's Pioneer to India, Burma*,

etc., London, 1899 ; also in Sir Wm. Foster, *Early Travels in India*, OUP, 1921.

²⁵ Observations of William Finch, merchant, taken out of his large Journal, *Purchas*, iv ; also in Foster, *ibid*.

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³¹ Joseph Salbancke (1609-10), *The Voyage through India, Persia, part of Turkie, the Persian Gulf and Arabia*, 1609-10 in *Purchas*.

³² Sir Thomas Herbert, *Description of the Persian Monarchy now being the Oriental Indies and Africa*, 1634. Some years' travels into the diverse parts of Africa and Asia the Great, London, 1677. He never visited Bengal.

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³³ *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia*, 1608-67, ed. by Sir R. Carnac Temple and L. M. Anstey, vol. ii, *Hakluyt*, London, 1907-36.

³⁴ William Bruton, *Voyages to Bengala or News from the East Indies* in Osborne's *Collection of Voyages and Travels*, vol. ii, London, 1745.

³⁵ *John Marshall in India: Notes and Observations in Bengal*, ed. by Shafaat Ahmad Khan, London, 1927.

³⁶ Thomas Bowrey, *A Geographical Account of the Countries round the Bay of Bengal, 1669 to 1679*, ed. Lt. Col. Sir Richard Carnac Temple, Cambridge, 1905 ; *The Papers of Thomas Bowrey, 1669-1713*, ed. by the same, London, 1927.

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³⁸ Jean Baptiste Tavernier, Baron of Auborn, *Les Six Voyages—Finished 1670*, London, 1678. He visited India several times. *Travels in India*, 2 vols., tr. from French ed. of 1676 and ed. by V. Ball, London, 1889. Revised and ed. by W. Crooke, 1925.

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- ⁴⁰ *Les Voyages ... Amsterdam, 1727*, in three parts, ed. M. Maval, London, 1687 ; pt. iii deals with India. *The Indian Travels of Monsieur de Thevenot and Gemelli Careri*, ed. by S. N. Sen, New Delhi, 1949, Ch. XL, 94-97. His itinerary did not include Bengal (see map in Sen). The title of the chapter itself shows that his ideas about the extent of Bengal were vague.
- ⁴¹ P. Kacpelin, *La Campagne Indes Orientales et F. Martin*, Paris, 1908 ; F. Martin, *Memoire*, ed. by Martineau, 3 vols., Paris, 1931-34 ; Jean Law, *Memoire*, ed. by Martineau, Paris, 1913.
- ⁴² *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, ed. by Yule, vol. 2, Ludovico Varthema, (i) *The Travels of*, tr. from Italian edn. of 1510, ed. by G. P. Badger, London, 1863 ; (ii) *The Itinerary of*, by J. W. Jones, with a discourse on Varthema and his travels in southern Asia by R. C. Temple, Hakluyt, London, 1928.
- ⁴³ *The Travels of a Noble Roman into East Indies and Arabian Deserts*, tr. by G. Havers, London, 1664 ; also, *The Travels of into India*, ed. Edward Grey, 2 vols., Hakluyt Soc., London, MDCCCXCII.
- ⁴⁴ *Storia do Mogor or A Pepys of Mogul India*, 4 vols., tr. by William Irvine, London, 1907-8, reprint, Calcutta, 1965. *Memoirs of the Mogul Court*, tr. by W. Irvine, ed. by Michael Edwards, London, 1957 ; *A Pepys of Mogul India, 1653-1708*, ed. by M. L. Irvine, London, 1913.
- ⁴⁵ Giovanni Francisco Gemelli Careri, *Indian Travels of Monsier De Thevenot and Gemelli Careri*, ed. by S. N. Sen, New Delhi, 1949. He says, "..... tho' in so vast an empire, there be some Barren Lands, yet there are some kingdoms wonderful, fruitful, as is that of Bengala, which exceeds Egypt, not only in Plenty of Rice, Corn, Sugar, support of Humane life ; but in the richest commodities, as Silk, Cotton, Indigo and the like" (p. 241). Again, "This kingdom of Bengala is accounted the most Fruitful the Mogul has, by reason of its Rivers. It has a great Trade for Silk, Calico, and other Stuffs" (p. 275).
- ⁴⁶ Lisbon Transcripts or copies and translations of Portuguese Records (Books of the Monsoons) in India Office. Also available at Panaji. Extracts in *English Fact, in India, 1634-36*. See also Danvers 'Report to the Secretary of State for India in Council on the Portuguese Records relating to the East Indies', London, 1899.
- ⁴⁷ Tr. from Spanish into English by Capt. John Stevens, London, 1695. 3 vols. Moreland (*From Akbar to Aurangzeb*) has translated extracts from Castenheda Correa and Couto.
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⁵³ Ed. by T. Bhattacharya and A. Chatterji, Calcutta, 1925.

⁵⁴ Ed. by M. M. Basu in *Sahajiya Sahitya*, Calcutta, 1932.

⁵⁵ For Kshemananda, *Monasamangal*, pt. 1, ed. J. M. Bhattacharya, Calcutta, 1943.

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⁵⁷ Ed. by Abdul Karim, Calcutta, 1916.

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⁵⁹ Sri Jatindra Mohan Bhattacharya has traced as many as one hundred twenty-one (121) names of such poets. See his *Banglar Vaishnavabhavapanna Musahman Kavi, 1945-1962*. See also S. B. Dasgupta's in *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* (1363 B.S., Magh—Chaitra issue) ; see my writings mentioned in f.n. 52 above.

⁶⁰ See S. H. Askari, 'Bengal as reflected in the Sufi Literature of Bihar and U.P.', meant for publication in a volume on Cultural History of Bengal, University of Burdwan. He kindly showed it to me. A few such works are *Mirat al asrar* (by Abdul Rahman Chishti, a contemporary of Jahangir and Shahjahan) ; *Rafiqul Arifin* (Phulwari *khangah* library) ; *Maktubat-i Ashrafi* ; *Tabaqat-i Shahjahani* (OPL, Patna). Some of these refer to the oppression of Raja Ganesh (Kans). The *Maktubat-i Sadi* and other works of Makhdum Ahmad Sharfuddin Ahmad, who lived long in Sonargaon, refer to Sultan Shamsuddin Firuz of Sonargaon.

LITERARY SOURCES OF THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL BENGAL

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NO SYSTEMATIC HISTORY OF BENGAL was written before the beginning of the British Period. The main reason of this was that the Bengalees were not history-minded people. The Hindus are well-known for their callousness, if not indifference, towards history. The Muslims, especially the Muslims of India on the other hand, loved to write and appreciate history. But it is a pity that the Muslims of Bengal followed the footsteps of their neighbours and like them almost totally neglected history.

In the modern times, sincere and systematic attempts have been made to reconstruct the history of Bengal of the ancient and medieval periods. Of the varied sources on which scholars have depended, the most important is perhaps the literature, which comprises Sanskrit as well as vernacular texts. The present paper deals with both of them.

The earliest of these sources are the songs which are known as the *Charyapadas*. They are written by the saints belonging to the school of Mahayana Buddhism. The inner meaning of the songs is, to some extent, obscure. But that does not create much difficulty for the historians, because many facts about the social and cultural history of that period can be gleaned from the *prima facie* meaning of these songs. As for example, we learn that at that time in this country, there were some kind of dramatic performances known as *Buddha Nataka*, that the game of chess was very popular here, that mice used to create much damage, and so on.

The other important literary source about the history of that

period is a Sanskrit narrative poem named *Ramacharita*, written by Sandhyakara-Nandi. In this poem each verse has got two meanings. One relates to Rama, the epic hero, another to Ramapala, the famous king of Pala dynasty. From this poem, we learn much about Ramapala and his successors from a contemporary writer. From the point of view of social history also, this work is important. From it we learn that the *Kaivartas* of Bengal were so powerful that they could become the masters of vast area for some time by overthrowing the Palas.

In the days of the Sena Kings, some Sanskrit and Bengali works were written, from which we can glean a few historical information. From the Smṛiti works (*Danasagara* and *Adbhuta-sagara*), written by Ballala Sena, we learn that the king was a scholar on that subject. Dhoyi's *Pavanaduta*, a love-poem, speaks much on the qualities of king Lakshmanasena. In Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda*, we find the mention of some poets, who are said to be court-poets of Lakshmanasena. Besides giving information about the kings, the works mentioned above also serve as important sources of social and cultural history of Bengal. In Dhoyi's *Pavanaduta*, we get a description of Vijayapura, one of the capitals of the Sena kings. Halayudha Misra's *Brahmanasarasvasva* is an important Smṛiti text, which throws much light on the social conditions of this period. This book informs us that the author was the Chief Minister and Chief Judge of Lakshmanasena.

Unfortunately, no literature, either Bengali or Sanskrit (written by Bengali writers), whose composition can be dated between 1210 and 1410 A.D. with certainty, has been found so far. Some scholars are, however, of the opinion that Jimutavahana, the author of the *Kala-Viveka* and *Daya-Bhaga*, two important Smṛiti texts and useful sources on the social history of Bengal, belonged to this period. After 1410 A.D., we get a good deal of literature written in both the languages. Many of the literary works of this period throw considerable light on the history of Bengal. The earliest among them are the works of Brihaspati Misra. Brihaspati was a great scholar. He wrote commentaries on *Gitagovinda*, *Sisupala-Vadha*, *Meghaduta* and *Kumarasambhava*, a treatise on *Smṛiti-ratnahara* and a very

important book on lexicography entitled *Padachandrika*. The literary career of Brihaspati began in about 1420 A.D. and continued at least up to 1474 A.D. in which year he completed the *Padachandrika*. Brihaspati came into close contact with many Sultans of Bengal and also with some of their officers. He received titles and awards from them. In the introductory verses of almost each of his patrons and in *Smriti-ratnasara* and *Padachandrika*, he described the ceremonies which were performed during the receipt of some of these awards and titles. Brihaspati's works throw much light on the attitude of the Muslim kings of Bengal and their officers towards the Hindu scholars. The most important among the patrons of Brihaspati Misra was Sultan Rukh-ud-din Barbak Shah (1455-76). Brihaspati's *Smriti-ratnahara* is an important source-book for the study of the social history of contemporary Bengal.

Three other literary sources, all written in the second half of the fifteenth century, throw some light on Rukh-ud-din Barbak Shah's patronage towards learning and his liberal attitude towards the Hindus. One of them is Govardhana's *Purana-sarvasva*, written in Sanskrit. In this work, the author says that his patron, Kuladhara, a Hindu, received honorific titles from Barbak Shah. The second is written in Bengali. It is the autobiography of the famous Bengali poet, Krittivasa. In this work, Krittivasa has described at length his visit to the court of Barbak Shah, where he was honoured by the king. The third source was also written in Bengali. It is Maladhara Vasu's *Srikrishnavijaya*, a long narrative poem. In this work, the poet mentions about his receiving the title, Gunaraja Khan, from the king of Bengal, who has been identified with Barbak Shah.

From the sixteenth century onwards, we get numerous Bengali literary works, from which we gather plenty of historical facts. These works fall into three different categories :

A. *The Biographies of Chaitanya* belonging to this category are plentiful in number. But we are concerned only with those which were written either in the sixteenth century or in the early years of the seventeenth century. Excepting Murari Gupta's *Srikrishna-Chaitanya-Charitamritam* and Kavikarnapura's *Chai-*

tanya-Charitamrita-mahakavyam and *Chaitanya-Chandrodaya-natakam* (which were written in Sanskrit), all the other major biographies of Chaitanya written during this period were written in Bengali. Their names are mentioned below :

1. *Chaitanya-bhagavata* by Brindavana Dasa
2. *Chaitanya-mangala* by Jayananda
3. *Chaitanya-mangala* by Lochana Dasa
4. *Gauranga-vijaya* by Chudamani Dasa
5. *Chaitanya-Charitamrita* by Krishnadasa Kaviraja

From these works we not only get details about the life of Chaitanya, the famous religious reformer, but also get materials for reconstructing the social and cultural history of that period from them. From some of these books, especially from the first two, we get some valuable information about the political history of Bengal between the years 1480 and 1520 A.D. It will not be an exaggeration to state that these books supply valuable materials for reconstructing the history of the famous king, Ala-ud-din Husain Shah (1493-1519).

B. *Mangala-Kavyas* (i.e., *Epic-like Bengali poems, in which different Puranic and non-Puranic deities have been eulogised*) :

All the mangala-kavyas contain ample materials relating to the social and cultural history of Bengal of the medieval period. Below we are giving a list of some of them with dates of their compositions, which are most notable from the point of view of history.

1. *Chandimangala* by Kavikankana Mukundarama Chakravarti (c. 1600 A.D.)
2. *Manasa-mangala* by Ketakadasa Ksemananda (c. 1640 A.D.)
3. *Dharma-mangala* by Ruparam Chakravarti (c. 1662-63 A.D.)
4. *Dharma-purana* by Jadunatha (c. 1695 A.D.)
5. *Annadamangala* by Rayagunakara Bharatachandra Raya (1742 A.D.)
6. *Raya-mangala* by Krishnarama Dasa (1686 A.D.)
7. *Sivayana* by Ramesvara (1711 A.D.)

It is interesting to note that the works mentioned above also supply some information about the political history of the contemporary period. Mukundarama's *Chandimangala* contains two autobiographical fragments of the poet, one of which gives the name of Man Singh as the ruler of Bengal, and in it we get a picture of the tyranny of government officials and revenue-collectors of that time. Ketakadasa's *Manasa-mangala* also contains an autobiographical fragment of the poet, which tells how the death of Bara Khan, the local chief, in a battle, affected the lives of the people of Selimabad Pargana. Ruparama's autobiographical fragment, contained in his *Dharma-mangala*, refers to Shuja, the son of Shah Jahan, as the governor of Bengal and is eloquent of him. Jadunatha, in his *Dharma-purana*, has described how Krishnarama Raya, the founder of the Burdwan Raj, got ascendancy over the Zemindari of Burdwan. But the most outstanding work, in this respect, is Bharatachandra's *Annada-mangala*. In it, the poet has not only given us detailed information about his patron, Raja Krishnachandra of Nadia and his court, but he has also presented a vivid account of the raids of the Marhatha Bargi marauders.

From the point of view of social and cultural history, the most important among the works mentioned above is Mukundarama's *Chandimangala*. Next comes Ramesvara's *Sivayana*, in which the poverty of the common people of that time has been vividly depicted.

C. *Historical works* : Only four works belonging to this category have been discovered so far. All in Bengali, they are as follows :

1. *Rajamala* (Vols. I-IV)
2. *Champakavijaya*
3. *Krishnamala*
4. *Purana*

The first three were written in Tripura*. They deal with the history of Tripura. The first volume of *Rajamala* is said to

* For details about the historical value of these works, see the papers on Tripura in this volume. —Editor

have been produced in the fifteenth century, the second in the sixteenth, the third in the seventeenth and the fourth in the eighteenth. All the four volumes underwent thorough 'revision' in the nineteenth century. Older manuscripts, no doubt, present a more authentic version of the work. But, even in the older manuscripts, one can detect interpolations in some places. *Chompaka-vijaya* and *Krishna-mala* were written in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries respectively and they present correct descriptions of contemporary events.

The *Maharashtra-purana* composed by one Gangarama in 1751 A.D. contains an eye-witness account of the invasion of West Bengal by the Marhatha Bargis. Though the work has been written in *Puranik* style, its value as source of history is immense.

Besides these major sources, some stray poems, containing bits of historical materials are also known.

The Sanskrit literary sources of history, belonging to this period are mainly works on Smriti. The most important among them are the books of Raghunandana. They furnish us with ample facts about the social condition of the Bengali Hindus of that time. Raghunandana flourished in the sixteenth century. The Smriti texts written by Srinatha Acharya-Chudamani and Govindananda Kavikankanacharya also constitute an important source in this respect.

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Modern Period

A COMPREHENSIVE TREATMENT OF THE HISTORY OF MODERN BENGAL

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I

THE historian's story and his sources are like two ends of the same cord. The historian will say : 'no source no history'. Without sources history has no basis, while left to themselves sources have no meaning. Sources do not speak on their own. They are made to speak by the historian who has already a plan, a design and a frame of the story he wants to narrate. In his quest for sources the historian must have a clear idea of what he is seeking for ; and what he seeks is hinged on what he has already planned. In any enumeration of the sources of the history of Bengal, therefore, a panoramic view of what the history of modern Bengal projected, will not be either unnecessary or out of place.

Where does the modern period in Bengal start ? To many this may seem to be an absurd question and the prompt reply will be—either 1707 or 1757. Those who look at the history of Bengal from the Mughal point of view will assert that 1707—the death of Aurangzeb—is the beginning of a new period. Others who interpret modern Bengal in terms of the empire-building efforts of the English in India, will certainly agree with Jadunath Sarkar that "When the sun dipped into the Ganges behind the blood-red field of Plassey, on that fateful evening of 23rd June . . ."¹ the modern age began. These are conventional date-lines for modern Bengal, and it will be repulsive to many if these dates are rejected as irrelevant to the structural point of

view. The year 1757 quite fits in the legacy of British India historiography. Recently, it has been generally agreed that the importance of the battle of Plassey has been greatly exaggerated and magnified. Plassey can never be said to have resulted in the British conquest of Bengal. Panikkar rightly held that "it would be a mistake to think that Plassey either gave the province of Bengal to the Company or made the Company a military power of any significance."² The validity of the other date-line—the year 1707—is more uncertain. The year was definitely important in the context of power politics in the Mughal empire. Delhi was in doldrums after the death of Aurangzeb, but its impact on the internal situation in Bengal was almost negligible, if not nil. Neither the Subahdar nor the Dewan appeared to have been directly affected, and life in Bengal flowed through its usual affluent channel oblivious of what happened at the seat of the imperial government. The difficulty is, and no serious attention has hitherto been paid to this aspect, that the modern period of Bengal has always been construed in the broader context of changing power politics in India—the rise and fall of empires.

It is conceded that any periodisation of history is somewhat artificial and arbitrary. Still dates of historical periods are suggested, keeping in mind the forces within the society that have either a stabilising or a destabilising tendency. To me a much surer and a much relevant date will be 1700 when Murshid Kuli Khan (then Kartalab Khan) was appointed by Aurangzeb as Dewan of Bengal from which status he rose to the position of Deputy Subahdar in 1713 and finally Subahdar in 1717. The administrative fabric he had reconstructed continued to hold good for nearly three quarters of a century. Notwithstanding later traumatic political experiences in Bengal, the system of Murshid Kuli Khan gave a new element of stability to the society that was left almost undisturbed till 1770. We can thus take a century-view of the history of modern Bengal. It is needless to emphasise that the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries had distinct characteristics and trends in the case of Bengal. The period between 1900 and 1947 saw nothing but the prolongation of the shadow of the late nineteenth century.

The history of Bengal in the eighteenth century is a record of transition from the old order to the new. Bengal then stood between two momentous changes. On the one hand, it witnessed the gradual withering away of the traditional country power, and on the other, it saw the emergence of a new force—an alien one—that engulfed the subcontinent in the long run. In a sense Bengal stood at the cross-roads of Indian history and symbolised the high and low watermarks of it. Politically speaking, in the eighteenth century Bengal saw the decay and the ultimate disappearance of the Mughal authority and the emergence of the superiority of the English. While Robert Clive was sowing the seeds of the new imperialism, the desolate tombs of Murshid Kuli and Alivardi helplessly looked on. Ironically, Shah Alam II, the crippled Mughal Emperor, signed away his own authority by the *Grant of Dewani* in August, 1765. K. K. Dutta rightly remarked that the *Grant* gave “a *de jure* recognition to the *de facto* authority of the English in Bengal”.³

Murshid Kuli Khan, though an able but virtually the dictatorial ruler of Bengal, preferred to link up the political set-up of his *Suba* with the body politic of the Mughal empire. Shujauddin and Sarfaraz's regimes were but a prolongation of the shadow of Murshid Kuli's rule. When Alivardi effected a Revolution in 1740 by acquiring the Masnad by force from Sarfaraz, Bengal stood on the threshold of significant silent changes. One notable features of Alivardi's time was that Bengal politics assumed an independent course, unhampered by the rise and fall of power groups in Delhi. Delhi court politics had little impact on the political fate of Bengal. Though Alivardi acknowledged the sovereignty of the Mughal Emperor, for all practical purposes Mughal authority in Bengal had become non-existent. It is interesting that Alivardi even stopped payment to the Imperial treasury. Bengal began to rotate within the orbit of its own politics largely overshadowed by the English.

Vacuum is a negative concept in politics. It must be filled up by one or the other. While the Mughal authority in Bengal was waning, the political interest of the European powers, particularly that of the English, was growing. Farruk Siyar's Far-

man of 1717 granted to the English later became a medium as well as a cover to penetrate the body politic of Bengal. It may be said that the growing penetration of the English into the political structure in Bengal was directly proportional to the decline of the Mughal power at the centre and the authority of the Nawab in Bengal. Notwithstanding the Maratha invasions and the Afghan insurrection, Alivardi could somehow maintain the precarious balance of power. But even during his lifetime, the symptoms of the growing assertive attitude of the English became clear. In this background a confrontation between Sirajuddaulah and the English East India Company was the logical outcome. Even before the recovery of Calcutta, the objectives of the English vis-a-vis Bengal had been clearly set by Governor Pigot of Madras who responded to the appeal for help from Governor Drake and his men at Falta. One of the objectives, the most important one from the point of view of Bengal, was a political revolution in Bengal. Cut off from the main currents of Mughal politics and control, Bengal fast headed towards a revolution at Plassey. This had practically become inevitable as Siraj was considered impossible by all concerned. The irresolute Nawab could not nip the disintegrating forces in the bud. It is no wonder that the conspirators aided by Seths, the hitherto pillars of strength of the Bengal Nawabs, would find a willing partner in the English in fulfilling their nefarious game. The communion of mutual interest between the English and a section of prominent Bengal elite, both Hindus and Mussalmans, had struck roots. By that time the English had outgrown their European rivals in commercial and military strength. The atmosphere had become congenial for their playing the role of a king-maker. They had already absorbed the shock given by Siraj and were on the offensive since the Treaty of Alinagar. The French at Chandernagore were crushed in March 1757 before the English could oust Siraj in June.

It must be pointed out that the conspirators did not invite the English to rule over Bengal. They thought that they were utilising the English in satisfying their own objective—to place one from among their own group on the Masnad, as Siraj was detestable. Perhaps, they could never imagine that in the long

run the table would be turned against them and they would be subservient to the English. The English also did not want anything more than establishing a sort of protectorate in Bengal with the Nawab remaining in tact in appearance. They did not certainly want to take over Bengal at that stage as probably they "did not go to the extent of believing that the structure of political authority was incompatible with their commercial prosperity."⁴ However, Mir Jafar became the Nawab only in name and it was the English who pulled the strings from behind.

The success of the experimentation of protectorate depended upon two requisites :

1. The ability of the Nawab to administer satisfactorily so that the commercial interests of the English were not injured as a result of a possible chaos and confusion.
2. The Nawab must remain under the thumb of the English and he must submit to their wishes and dictates.

The first requisite remained unfulfilled with Mir Jafar as the Nawab. He surrendered more privileges to the Company by the 'General Sunnad' of 15th July, 1757, no doubt, but he was unequal to the task of a successful Nawab. Moreover, the fidelity of the Nawab was suspected after Ali Gauhar's invasion of Bihar and the Dutch attempt to supplant English influence in Bengal. The English calculated that if a more able administrator was placed as the Dewan, then their economic interests would be secured. Chaos in the internal administration in Bengal was an anti-thesis to English commercial aggrandisement. The proven ability of Mir Kasim as an administrator made him a natural choice of the English, who wanted to foist him as the Dewan. The transaction took an unexpected turn when Mir Jafar preferred to step down in 1760 instead of accepting Mir Kasim as his Dewan. The English, thereupon, found themselves in the midst of an unintentioned revolution and were obliged to put Mir Kasim on the Masnad. The second requisite received a bad jolt very soon when Mir Kasim decided to assert his own authority and in the process stood face to face with the corruptions perpetrated by the English since Plassey. A determined and independent type of person as he was, Mir Kasim had perhaps no

alternative to a confrontation. The affair of Shah Alam, the affair of Ramnarayan and the controversy over the question of private inland trade proved that the Nawab was determined to cut the English down to their proper size. But it was like sailing against the tide. The English had by that time struck roots too deep to be dislodged. In his desperation the Nawab tried to enlist the support of the Emperor and the Nawab of Oudh. The Confederate army was, however, no match for the military superiority of the English in the battle of Buxar. Neither the battle of Plassey nor that of Buxar was an accident of history. Both of them lay in the logic of events. When the battle of Buxar was won, followed by the Grant of Dewani, the position of the English had undergone a sea-change. They were no longer mere merchants. They had practically become the master of Bengal.

Over the years, with the growing experience of the political conditions in Bengal, the English suitably adjusted their *modus operandi*; but each step pushed them forward to the inevitable end—the establishment of their own sway over the province. In the first half of the eighteenth century they thought that the acquisition of an Imperial Farman would serve their purpose. Later, they came to realise that a mere Farman was not enough. There were many ways to circumvent the Farman and to frustrate its advantages. They then leaned towards the experimentation of a protectorate. But the severe limitations of the idea of a protectorate were clearly demonstrated during the time of Mir Kasim. Protectorate was successful so long as the Nawab was a lesser personality and was amenable to the dictates of the English. In 1765 the Company thought that the grip over the structure would be ensured if the English became a partner in administration. Hence, the prayer for Dewani by Clive. The 'Grant of Dewani' was actually a *coup de grace* vis-a-vis Bengal. Constitutionally speaking, the English were no longer an alien force. On the other hand, there was no constitutional constraint on the power of the Mughals to choose as to who should be appointed Dewan. This constitutional position was very shrewdly and efficiently capitalised by the English to explode the indigenous structure from within. Since 1765 there began a systematic pro-

cess of defuncting the Nawab till he came a *functus officio* in the last decade of the eighteenth century. Mughal political authority was ultimately eclipsed and the rule of the East India Company was ushered in. The history of Bengal since 1765 is not a history of the independent Nawabs and their relationship with the East India Company. It is rather a history of the consolidation and extension of the new imperialism. The Nawab of Bengal went into oblivion for ever and the destiny of the province was in the hands of the English.

Slowly and perhaps unperceived, the Company had started to build up an empire, the initial fruits of which they had tasted. After the 'Grant of Dewani', Clive was faced with a difficult situation. Without sufficient knowledge of the administration of the country he had shouldered the burden of revenue management. As a *via media*, the English introduced a system of dual government in which power was divorced from responsibility. Verelst and Cartier, the two successive Governors, were passive spectators so far as the genuine interests of Bengal were concerned. The coffers of the Company became full and the Naib Dewan was satisfied. As a sort of Nature's revenge against this arrangement, Bengal fell under the grip of a devastating famine in which nearly one-third of the total population of the Subah perished. The shock was so great that the Company's authority woke up from the long deep slumber 'to stand forth as Dewan' both in name and in practice in 1772. Warren Hastings and Cornwallis successively played a great role to fulfil the imperial mission of the English in Bengal. The political importance of the province since 1772 lay not in the internal political developments but in the extension of the tentacles of British imperialism to contiguous regions in north India with Bengal as a secure base. So far as Bengal was concerned, the main task was consolidation. The period between 1772 and 1793 may be said to be a period of experiments. Some sort of an empire had grown up without an administrative framework, a suitable constitution and a well-defined relationship with the mother country. All this was achieved during the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

In the economic sphere, the eighteenth century was marked by the decay of the indigenous economy and the penetration of commercial capitalism. Before Plassey the economy of the province ran in a traditional style within the Mughal administrative framework reshaped by Murshid Kuli Khan. But it was then a self-sufficient village economy in its essence. Notwithstanding an apparent economic prosperity, there existed, in the words of Charles Trevelyan, a state of things "in which everybody is obliged to produce and manufacture everything he requires for his own consumption".⁵ Trade and commerce went on in the traditional pattern hampered by *Sayer* and other inland duties and by the bad state of roads and lines of communication. Industries flourished only in localised pockets under the village system. The system of banking and credit was not developed. The currency system was complicated and productive of exaction. Despite many drawbacks, the economy of the province was admirably fitted in the political structure of the time; and it ran more or less smoothly. One interesting feature of the pre-Plassey days was the growing commercial penetration of the Europeans, particularly the English. The preferential treatment that the English had received under the Farman of 1717 helped them dominate the economic life of Bengal in the long run. Their investment increased steadily and by the time Siraj was ousted from the *masnad*, the English had become an economic force to reckon with. After Plassey concessions were converted into rights which were eating into the vitals of the economic life. The 'General Sunnud' of Mir Jafar was the green signal for a large-scale invasion of the internal economy of the province till its control passed into the hands of the East India Company under the 'Grant of Dewani'. Confusion was worse confounded between 1765 and 1772 when the province passed under the dual government. Some order was, however, established by Warren Hastings and Cornwallis. But once again a new destabilising force appeared towards the end of the eighteenth century in the shape of the industrial revolution in England. With all its defects the old economic pattern had suited the needs of Bengal quite well. Within the traditional framework Bengal had developed special types of arts and crafts. The waves of industrial re-

volution seriously dislocated all that. Under its impact a gradual breakdown of the old structure began particularly after 1793. Bengal thereafter ran through a full cycle of economic transition before the penetration of industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century could be complete.

The decay of the traditional political and economic structure was not without significance for the Bengal society in the eighteenth century. The vertical divisions of the society were badly disturbed when the Mughal authority was eclipsed. The old nobility was under strain and ultimately went out of occupation after the take over of administration by the English. The society received another rude blow when the famine of 1770 took place. A sense of despair and helplessness gripped the society from which it took a long time for Bengal to recover. The introduction of Permanent Settlement in 1793 was productive of far reaching social consequences. The zamindars, with their unearned income and plenty of time at their disposal, later came to the forefront in Bengal's social stage. With the introduction of English system of administration and justice a new vista was opened at the turn of the eighteenth century and Bengal stood on the threshold of a strange social and intellectual ferment. There was, however, dark side of the picture. In the process of economic transition, rural Bengal came under severe strain. A new urban pull towards Calcutta was fast increasing which later developed into a metropolitan pull in the first half of the nineteenth century. While Calcutta was gaining importance and glare, rural Bengal began to languish. How Bengal adjusted itself to these mighty changes in the nineteenth century is a phenomenon worth noting.

II

In the history of Bengal the eighteenth century shed off imperceptibly into the nineteenth. In many respects, the shadow of the eighteenth century lengthened and cast a deep impression on the history of Bengal in the next century. If the eighteenth century was a passage from darkness to light as Jadunath Sarkar

imagined it to be, the nineteenth witnessed the dawn of modernity. The last century saw Bengal coming out of its own shell to play a greater role in the subcontinent. "It would be hardly any exaggeration to say that the evolution in Bengal formed a basic pattern for the rest of India."⁶ There is much substance in the assertion of Jadunath Sarkar: "If Periclean Athens was the school of Hellas, the eye of Greece, mother of arts and eloquence, that was Bengal to the rest of India under British rule, but with a borrowed light, which it had made its own with marvellous cunning."⁷

It seems paradoxical but it is true that Bengal derived certain advantages by being the centre of British imperial power. Apart from staying nearer the centre of power, Bengal profited from getting closely interwoven with the growing British administrative fabric. Moreover, contact with the West became more direct and deep. There was a temporary controversy over the system of English education, no doubt, but no general repulsion towards English had found an expression in the province. Recently an attempt has been made to prove that the Bengalees had become conscious of the practical worldly advantage to adopt English education. It was asserted, "English was never thrust on the Indians by the British. Indeed, a number of British administrators of the time had wanted a 'vernacular' type of education for the country. It was the elite of the Hindu society of nineteenth century Bengal who eagerly grasped the opportunity to learn English..."⁸ It is doubtful whether Bengal leaned towards English education only with a businessman's approach. English had become a status symbol for a dominant section of the Bengali society since the establishment of the Hindu College which spearheaded a crusade against obscurantism and orthodoxy. It is interesting to find that the orthodox section deprecated aggressive Westernism, but did not set their face against English as a language. At least English was not considered to be incompatible with forces of progress—conservative or radical. In the second half of the nineteenth century, however, the politically conscious middle class nationalists began to think of remoulding education in the greater interest of the country. Thus we find a disillusioned Madhusudan Dutta pining

for the treasures in Bengali language and literature. The satirical pen of Bankim Chandra deprecated the attitude of ridiculing Bengali by English educated 'Babus' (although Bankim himself was an English educated administrator). The climax of the rethinking could be seen in the writings of Tagore. But all this was not due to any hostility to English, but a resurrected love for the mother tongue.

One of the remarkable features that marked the history of the nineteenth-century Bengal was the 'new ferment' or the 'new awakening' popularly known as the 'Bengal Renaissance'. The gradual permeation of Western ideas and English education since the beginning of the last century sowed the seeds of an all-embracing mental ferment that flowed into different channels of thinking. The period between 1800 and 1860 was a hey-day of the Bengal renaissance. After 1860 it faded out, as a distinct phenomenon, into the rising waves of nationalism. When the Fort William College was established in 1800, it gave a green signal for the emergence of a new consciousness within the frame of the traditional society. But the establishment of the Hindu College opened the flood-gates of an awakening in the Bengali society. There is a lot of controversies regarding the character and achievement of renascent Bengal. Nowadays, even the basic premise of renaissance in the Indian context is challenged. Leaving aside the highly debatable proposition whether the phenomenon could be called renaissance at all, one can point out the areas where there was a new ferment effecting a welcome change : socio-religious life, cultural life and the political sphere. Society and religion virtually provided the battle ground for different groups—all advocating reforms of their own brand. There was no question of going back to any supposed 'golden age', and eradication of the evils in the society marked the efforts of renascent Bengal. Reformism was the common creed, the difference lay in the approach and method. The nineteenth century was thus characterised as the century of social and religious reform movements. Interestingly, however, there was little or practically no attempt to change the basic structure of the society—the caste-based structure of the Hindu society. And it was not a puzzle that other religious communities, particularly the Muslims, remained un-

affected by the waves of renaissance. Renaissance remained primarily a Hindu phenomenon. Moreover, the zeal for reform petered out, with few exceptions, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century when the middle-class intellectuals were drawn towards the nationalist political movement. The net outcome of all this was that fundamentally the society lay unchanged at the end of the period of renaissance. No doubt, a social consciousness manifested itself in the urban and sub-urban areas. The rural society almost refused to be impregnated with the ideas of radical social change. At best the lower strata of the country people looked to the progressive measures as a desirable standard. But an acceptance of that in their own rural framework of life was shuddering and repulsive. Thus, caste remained as the mainstay of Bengali Hindu social structure. Only rigours of the caste structure of the society could be somewhat mitigated by progressive reforms.

The lasting impact of the renaissance in Bengal was felt in the intellectual and cultural sphere. After an initial craze for English till the sixties of the nineteenth century, there came a magnificent outburst of creative activity in literature. The flowering of the renaissance was evident in the rapidly developing Bengali literature in the second half of the century. The amount of quality-output during that period was amazing. The works of Madhusudan Dutta, Bankim and Rabindranath, among many others, enriched Bengali language and literature beyond recognition. The intellectual upsurge and enterprise were not confined merely to creative literature. Two new phenomena followed the intellectual upheaval in the first half of the nineteenth century. One was the efforts to form associations for the cultivation of mind and the other was the rapid growth of the Press which soon became a powerful factor in the public life of Bengal. These two in their turn received a great impetus from the political awakening. Culturally speaking, the century, particularly the second half of it, was a period of blossom in Bengal and a distinct taste and way of life emerged as an unmistakable mark of Bengalianness. Simultaneously, a pride in its cultural pattern found a strong footing in the Bengali character. The cultural mooring of modern Bengali life had been strongly laid.

The political importance of Bengal in the nineteenth century lay not in the British expansion or its consolidation but in the rise of nationalism which was another striking development during the century. It provided the life-blood to the political struggle against British imperialism towards the end of the century. Though nationalism as a positive and practical concept took a definite shape in the post-Mutiny period, it might be described as a political by-product of renaissance. Nationalism in Bengal was a complex socio-political phenomenon and its distinctive character was its intimate mingling with religious ideas and appeals. It is rather peculiar that a secular concept of nationalism should look like a quasi-metaphysical idea. To understand the rising nationalism of Bengal properly one must not lose sight of the religious movements. Religion actually provided the backdrop of nationalism, and that is why men like Bankim Chandra and Bipin Chandra Pal wanted the union of the political spirit with the traditions and sentiments of the past and of both with the ineradicable religious temperament of the people. In the writings of Bankim nationalism itself was transformed into a religion and became a creed for the youth. The nationalist movement in Bengal, however, developed various shades. Colonialism generally produces two-pronged reactions in the political life : one stream gets dependent on the forces of colonialism and the other becomes strengthened by the forces of nationalism. In other words, it produces collaborators as well as fighters. Even the fighters do not always agree on the method. After a vigorous phase of associations the rising nationalism in Bengal found a concrete expression in the All India National Conference held in Calcutta in 1883. A. M. Bose rightly called it "the first stage towards a National Parliament". When the second National Conference was held in 1885, the Indian National Congress was born. From the second session of the Congress Bengalee leaders associated themselves with the all-India body heart and soul. Thereafter, as Bipin Chandra Pal remarked in his autobiography, the distinct character of the Bengalee nationalism was almost lost in the activities of the Congress. But one should not suppose that nationalism in Bengal died out. Its tremendous power was demonstrated in the agitation against the partition of Bengal in

1905. It should also be made clear that in the nineteenth century the goal of the nationalist movement in Bengal was to secure more political participation and rights and not emancipation from the British rule as such. Earlier, 'awakened' intellectuals like Ram Gopal Ghosh desired in 1843 "nothing more sincerely than the perpetuity of the British sway in this country". No confrontation with the British authority could be imagined before the eighties of the last century. It is no wonder that the Bengalee middle class would rejoice over the suppression of the Sepoy Mutiny. Perhaps the stake of the middle class was too high, and nationalism as freedom from foreign rule was not clearly visualised before the nineties of the nineteenth century. The rise of extremism in the last decade of that century brought about a qualitative change in the political life of Bengal.

One is often tempted to interpret history in terms of the economy of the country concerned and it is conceded that this analysis is often a fruitful one. The character of a century may be derived from the class character of the men who matter. By and large, the colonial character of the economy was writ large on the developments in Bengal during the last century. The century itself had two distinct phases: the phase of 'economic transition' as it is popularly called, came definitely to an end in 1836 when the first serious attempt was made for market integration. The collapse of the indigenous economic pattern was a precondition for the penetration of industrial capitalism of England. The period between 1836 and 1900 witnessed a thorough colonial strangulation of the economy of Bengal which became totally subservient to the British industrial capitalism. The long debates before the passing of the Charter Act of 1833 which abolished the commercial monopoly of the East India Company, made it abundantly clear how India was going to be affected by the principles of political economy then prevalent in England. The principles enunciated by Adam Smith influenced the economic thinking in England in the late twenties and early thirties of the nineteenth century. Free trade and free competition became the watchwords. Indigenous industries were crushed out of existence, but in the second half of the nineteenth century new industries were slowly coming up fettered by the policy of free

trade. It became apparent that the concept of free trade was not to be a two-way affair. It granted a freedom of trade only to England, and Bengal was systematically fleeced in respect of trade and industries. R. C. Dutt rightly observed : "History does not record a single instance of one people ruling another in the interests of the subject nation".⁹ Nevertheless, a few broad characteristic features of the Bengal economy may be pointed out in the nineteenth century : Gradual integration of internal market, growing commercialisation of agriculture, decline and controlled resurgence of industries, and modernisation of the means of communication with the introduction of railways and steam navigation. There is no denying the fact that within the framework of a colonial economy, Bengal derived many incidental benefits during the second half of the nineteenth century which made the province a pioneer in the economic field. All this was counter-balanced by a rural tension, particularly that of the peasantry, and the concomitant vices of urbanisation in Bengal.

The above comprehensive survey of the history of modern Bengal leaves out a detailed description of the developments in the present century till 1947 as that period saw a continuation of the process of the late nineteenth century. There was not much of a fundamental change in the years after 1900 excepting the fact that the nationalist struggle was intensified and transformed into a struggle for freedom from the British rule. All energies converged into the one and only common objective—freedom of the country, without which, it was believed, no fundamental change was possible. British imperialism stood as the major obstacle to the realisation of the aspirations of the people in all walks of life, and hence it had to go first. Unfortunately, that was not to be without a partition of the province in 1947 on the religious basis. Partition was the backlash of British imperialism and the nationalists of all shades had to reconcile to their lot. It only remains to remark that the contradiction in our nationalist struggle was demonstrated in a peculiar way after the country had attained freedom. We have always decried British imperialism, but we succumbed to the divisive forces in the country. Historians have also reconciled themselves to the

fact of partition as being the wishes of the people of the two great communities in the country. Interestingly, to some modern Indian historians "the emergence of Pakistan like that of India and Indonesia as nation-states was the consummation of the idea of nationalism".¹⁰ If the validity of this argument is accepted, then the idea can be logically extended to the creation of Bangla Desh in 1971.

In the writings on the history of modern India those on Bengal have undoubtedly occupied the pride of place. The historiography on modern Bengal is rich in content and extent as there is no dearth of sources for different research topics. The complexity as well as variety of the history of modern Bengal have attracted generations of scholars. Conventional sources are being ransacked so to say, yet there are miles to go before they are exhausted. Actually, there cannot be any restricted connotation of the word 'sources' so far as the history of modern Bengal is concerned. We can use the expression of Marc Bloch to say that anything that contributes to the study of Bengal is a source. Fortunately for us, in recent years the great utility of literature as a useful source, particularly of social history, is widely acknowledged. At the same time, the value of recorded and testified interviews of the living revolutionaries in reconstructing the history of the freedom movement in Bengal is being acknowledged. The mental horizon of the scholars is widening since independence and the British-Indian legacy exemplified by the grip of records on the scholars of the earlier generation, is fast disappearing. It is sincerely hoped that with new intellectual equipment and capacity of the scholars, the history of modern Bengal will be projected more imaginatively as well as scholarly. Modernisation of the writing of the history of Bengal is no longer a far cry in the late twentieth century.

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SOURCES OF FRONTIER HISTORY OF BENGAL (1751—1885)

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THE TERM 'FRONTIER BENGAL' connotes an area comprising *jungle* and *nimki mahals* (forest and salt producing tracts) of *suba* Bengal of the eighteenth century. Nature of the soil, geological features and the river system of the region differentiate this area from the Chhotanagpur plateau of Bihar, coastal area of Balasore and the Gangetic Bengal. The region embraces the *jungle mahals* (forest tracts) with *bhum*-suffix. In the ancient literature the area is known as Radha (Jaina *Acharanga* and *Kalpa Sutras*, sixth century B.C.*) comprising Vajjabhumi and Subbabhumi or Suhma. In the Irda inscription we come across names of political units like 'Vardhamana-bhukti' and 'Danda-bhukti-mandala', while the *Ramacharita* of Sandhyakaranandi (eleventh century) refers to Vardhamana-bhukti, then ruled by a king called Jayasimha.** In 1751 Alivardi Khan ceded the revenues of the territories of Orissa beyond the Kansai river to Raghuji Bhonsle I of Nagpur. Since 1757 the Rajas (Chiefs) of the jungle mahals were brought under revenue settlements of the East India Company. In 1799 the whole region was in turmoil due to the Chuar revolt, peasant resistance movements. In 1805 the jungle mahal district was formed by Regulation XVIII but after the Bhumij revolt of 1832 by Regulation XIII of 1833 the district was abolished, the greater

* The forms in which they have come down to us suggest a later date for them. —*Editor*

** The Irda copperplate includes *Danda-Bhukti-mandala* in the *Vardhamana-bhukti*. Danda-bhukti finds mention in a still earlier record, namely, the Jayrampur copperplate of the first year of the reign of Gopachandra (first half of the sixth century). —*Editor*

part formed the modern districts of Singhbhum, Manbhum and Bankura. In 1803 Balasore, Cuttack and Puri, three districts of Orissa, were conquered by the Company's government from Raghuji II of Nagpur. Between 1751 and 1803 the Jungle and Nimki Mahals of Frontier Bengal had to withstand frontier incursions from the *bargis* of Orissa, the events generally termed *Bargir Hangama*:

In this region flourishing trade in salt, indigo, cotton and silk textile commodities continued till 1833 and lingered on till 1857, financed and managed by the private British entrepreneurs. The last half of the nineteenth century witnessed economic crisis leading to famine and migration of depeasantised population towards Calcutta and other urban centres and mining districts of Bengal and Bihar border areas.

The historical sources of the period may be categorised according to the nature of the historical problem of research : (1) Persian sources reflecting the relation between the Nawabs and the East India Company. The Persian chronicles cover the political events, military campaigns of the Mughal rulers and the Bengal Subedar. They contain references to military expeditions of the Nawabs towards Bihar and Orissa. (2) In the second category we have the Marathi sources depicting the Anglo-Bhonsle relation and the Marathi frontier incursions in the border areas of south-west Bengal. (3) The British regulations, gazetteers, memoirs, reports, printed records are of help to analyse the British revenue settlements in the Jungle Mahals. (4) The archival sources, printed reports, settlement papers and contemporary historical literature help us in depicting the sporadic peasant resistance movements. (5) Unpublished judicial and revenue records in the regional record rooms and Collectorates of Bankura, Burdwan and Midnapur supplement the archival records preserved in the State Archives at Calcutta, National Archives at Delhi and India Office Library, London. (6) Moreover, literary sources yet unpublished preserved in the Sahitya Parishads of Bishnupur and Midnapur, and the folklore collected by private individuals and government Tribal Welfare Department form the corroborative evidences, and (7) lastly, newspaper sources in Bengali and English throw flood

of light on the socio-economic life of the people in the nineteenth century till nationalist upsurge and terrorist agitation engulfed the whole region.

I

Of the primary sources the *Ain-i-Akbari* of Abul Fazl, translated by H. Blochmann and H. S. Jarrett (3 Vols., 1873-1894) would get preference for its administrative details concerning *Bhum*-ending tracts of Frontier Bengal. One can also mention Abul Fazl's *Akbarnamah*, Vols. 1-3 edited by H. Beveridge (Calcutta, 1939), Abdul Qadir Badaoni's *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* (ed. by Lt. Col. Ranking and W. H. Lowe, Calcutta, 1873), *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* by Khaja Nijamuddin Ahmed (ed. by H. M. Elliot and J. Dowson, Calcutta, 1869) and Khafi Khan's *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab* (ed. by Elliot and Dowson) as sources of history of the seventeenth-century Frontier Bengal. Two more printed books of Ghulam Husain Salim's *Riyaz-us-Salatin*, translated by Maulavi Abdus Salam (Calcutta, 1904) and *Seir Mutakherin* by Ghulam Husain Tabatabai or *A View of Modern Times* (1707-1780) reprinted by R. Cambray & Co. (Calcutta, 1904) give a graphic picture of the declining days of the Mughal rule in the Frontier Bengal. Sir Jadunath Sarkar had extensively quoted some Persian manuscripts like *Muraqat-i-Hassan* or *Letters of Mawlana Abul Hassan* and Inayetullah's *Akhkam-i-Alamgiri* (Rampur Ms. No. 219b) in *Journal of Bihar Orissa Research Society*, Vol. 2, Parts I and II. The English translation of *Calendar of Persian Correspondence* published from National Archives, Delhi in eleven volumes, starting from 1759 contain stray references to the political and economic history of the Frontier Bengal of the early eighteenth century. But the most important indigenous sources of information concerning Marathi frontier incursions in the Frontier Bengal and the Maratha rule in Orissa are considered to be the treaties written in the Marathi dialect, some of which have already been translated and edited in English by competent scholars. G. S. Sardesai edited multi-volume papers of the Peshwa Daftar, called *Marathi*

Riyasat, Madhya Bibhag, particularly Vol. II contains *Nagpurkar Bhonslanchen Bakhar* and in English translation *Selection from Peshwa Daftar* with English abstracts has copious references to the Bhonsle rule in Orissa. T. S. Shejwalkar edited *Nagpur Affairs* in 3 volumes as Deccan College Monograph series No. 7-9 from Poona in 1954, S. L. Vaidya *A Selection of Papers from the Records of Vaidya Family, Vaidya Daftar* in five volumes and Y. M. Kale edited *Poona Residency Correspondence* in five volumes from Poona by 1938. Besides these printed Marathi sources the Archives of Bombay and Nagpur preserve some Marathi sources still unutilised by the scholars. The printed and translated sources yield sufficient information for the socio-economic history of the then Frontier Bengal and its political relation with Orissa. Many British Residents were staying at Nagpur and regularly sending confidential reports to Calcutta. Mention may be made of *Early European Travellers in the Nagpur Territories*, published from Nagpur in 1904, Gense and Banaji edited first three volumes of *British Embassy to Poona*, published by the Gaikwads of Baroda in 1934, Richard Jenkin's *Report on the Territories of the Raja of Nagpur submitted to the Supreme Government of India* published from Nagpur in 1923, Grant Duff's 'magnum opus', *History of Mahrattas* in three volumes edited by S. M. Edwards (Calcutta, 1912) and C. U. Wills, *British Relations with the Nagpur State in the Eighteenth Century* (Nagpur, 1926) which contain copious references to Nagpur's diplomatic relation with Company's government on latter's maladministration in Orissa, frontier incursion in the Bengal-Orissa border areas and economic problems concerning trade in salt and textile commodities continuing between Bengal and Orissa provinces. Major J. Rennell's *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan* (London, 1793) also is a significant contribution to the socio-economic life of the then south-west Bengal Presidency.

The unpublished records may be classified into mainly two categories : (1) those which could be studied from the National Archives, Delhi and judicial, revenue, miscellaneous and Board of Trade records to be studied from the Bengal Record Room at Calcutta. The archival records at Delhi belong to the Home and

Foreign Departments of which Public Proceedings and Consultations, Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, Secret Proceedings and files of Consultations and Political Proceedings had copious references to the frontier incursions in south-west Bengal following anarchy in Orissa. The Miscellaneous volumes of the Home Department and Micro-films from British Museum Additional manuscripts are of great interest. At the India Office Library and Record Department (Commonwealth Relations Office), London the Bengal Political and Secret Consultations, Revenue and Judicial (Criminal and Civil) Consultations are available, the copies of which are also available at Delhi and Calcutta.

The Calcutta Record Room had archival records of mainly five categories relevant to the then political history of Frontier Bengal : (1) Proceedings of the Governor-General-in-Council in the Revenue Department, (2) Proceedings of the Committee of Revenue and later on after 1786 Board of Revenue at Fort William, (3) Proceedings of the Judicial Department (both civil and criminal), (4) Letters to and from the Court of Directors, and (5) Proceedings of the Board of Trade (Commercial) with miscellaneous proceedings volumes contain copious references to the British revenue settlements in the Jungle and Nimki Mahals, Company's trade and commercial investments in the different residencies and particularly salt and textile trade in the mahals of the Frontier Bengal. But the most important archival sources could be found out from the Midnapur Collectorate and Burdwan Collectorate Record Rooms which comprise : (1) General letters issued and received, (2) Settlement letters, (3) Jellasore correspondence, (4) Pataspur letters, and (5) Hidgellee and Tamlook salt letters. In both these archives Poolbundy papers and investments in public works departments could be found. The records, brittle, worms-eaten and on the verge of destruction, without any copy at the Calcutta record room, if studied thoroughly, would throw light on the revenue settlements in the region, frontier incursions and the consequent peasant resistance movements on the frontier Bengal.

Some of the archival sources have already been printed. We may mention some important treatises deserving special

importance : (1) *Selections of papers at the East India House relating to revenue, police and civil and criminal justice under the Company's Government in India*, 4 vols., London (1820-26) ; (2) Henry Rickett edited *Selections from the Records of the Bengal Government*, XVI (Calcutta, 1835) ; (3) W. W. Hunter edited *Bengal Ms. Records (1782-1807)*, 4 vols. (London, 1894) ; (4) W. K. Firminger edited *Bengal District Records : Midnapur (1763-1774)*, 4 vols. (Calcutta, 1914-26), and (5) Asok Mitra and Ranajit Guha edited *West Bengal District Records, New Series, Burdwan* (Calcutta, 1956) recently published are very helpful for the history of revenue settlements of the region, (6) N. K. Sinha edited *Midnapur Salt Papers : Hijli and Tamlook, 1781-1807* (Calcutta, 1954) and (7) two books of J. C. Price, *Notes on the History of Midnapur* (Calcutta, 1876) and *Chuar Rebellion* (reprinted in Census Report, Midnapur, 1951) and H. V. Bailey's *Memoranda of Midnapur, 1852* (Calcutta, 1902) contain recorded evidences of the peasant resistance movements in Midnapur and the Jungle Mahals. Two more books by K. P. Mitra, *A Handbook of the Historical Records in the Office of the Secretary to the Agent to the Governor-General, Eastern States and Political Agent at Sambalpur, 1803-1856* (Patna, 1933) and *Singhbhum Old Records* (Patna, 1958) edited by P. C. Roy Choudhury deserve mention.

In the second category of printed reports would come Reports and Regulations. The Parliamentary papers containing recorded evidences about the revenue administration of the region comprise *Parliamentary Papers* (1812-13), Vol. 10, Pap. No. 331, Vols. 8-9 (1808-13), *Fourth Report* No. 47, *Fifth Report* edited by W. K. Firminger (3 vols.) (Calcutta, 1817), 1832, Vols. 14, *Select Committee Report* (1832), and *Report on Salt* (1856, Vol. 26) may be mentioned as few examples of revenue records preserved in the National Library, Calcutta. Moreover, *Reports by the Agent to the Governor-General of Tours made by him through the districts attached to the Political Agency of the South West Frontier in 1840, 1844, 1847* (Calcutta, 1847) deserve mention for the military operations, revenue settlements in the Bengal-Bihar border areas.

The third category consists of Regulations compiled by W. Blunt and H. Shakespear, *An Abstract of the Regulations for the Provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa*, in 4 volumes (Calcutta, 1824-28), *Regulations passed by the Governor-General-in-Council of Bengal*, 3 Vols., printed by the order of the Court of Directors (London, 1825), *The Regulations of the Government of Fort William in Bengal in force at the end of 1853* (London, 1854) edited by Richard Clarks, J. H. Harington's *An Elementary Analysis of the Laws and Regulations enacted by the Governor-General-in-Council at Fort William* in 3 Vols. (Calcutta, 1805-22) and Extracts from *Harington's Analysis of the Bengal Regulations* (Calcutta, 1866) contain Bengal regulations.

The fourth category comprises a vast mass of gazetteer literature. It would include H. Coupland's *Bengal District Gazetteer, Manbhum* (Calcutta, 1911), M. G. Hallet and T. S. Macpherson's (edited) *Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteer, Ranchi* (Patna, 1917), Walter Hamilton's *The East India Gazetteer* in two volumes (2nd ed., London, 1828) along with his *A Geographical, Statistical and Historical Description of Hindostan* in two volumes (London, 1820), edited by W. W. Hunter. *The Imperial Gazetteer of India* in multi-volumes (Oxford, 1908), multi-volume *Bengal District Gazetteers* edited by L. S. S. O'Malley, consisting of Midnapur (Calcutta, 1911), Bankura (Calcutta, 1908), Beerbhum (Calcutta, 1910), Singhbhum, Serai-kella and Kherswan (Calcutta, 1910) and some volumes of *Bengal District Gazetteers* (new series) edited by A. Bandopadhyaya (Calcutta, 1962), particularly of Bankura, and the *Bengal and Agra Annual Guide and Gazetteer* in two volumes (Calcutta, 1841) give graphic picture of the statistical data and administrative information of the region. In this category C. U. Aitchison's (edited) *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sunnuds Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries* in different volumes (Calcutta, 1892) may be mentioned.

The fifth category of printed records would contain published settlement reports. In this category B. K. Gokhale edited *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the district of Manbhum*, 1918-25 (Patna, 1928), J. Reid edited *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the district*

of Ranchi, 1902-10 (Calcutta, 1912) as well as in the district of Manbhum, 1907-12 (Calcutta, 1912) and edited by J. D. Sifton, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement of Barabhum and Pathum estates in Manbhum district, 1907-12* (Patna, 1919) deal with the settlement operations in the jungle mahal districts. With these reports mention may be made of *Settlement Operations in Palamau district, 1913-20* (Patna, 1921) edited by T. W. Bridge, T. Craver edited *Final Report on the Settlement of Kalhan Government estates of Singhbhum district* (Calcutta, 1898), F. A. Slack edited *Report on the Settlement of the estate of the Maharaja of Chota Nagpur with Ms. additions* (Calcutta, 1888), and D. H. E. Sunder's edited volume of *Final Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of Palamau, 1894-97* (Calcutta, 1898).

The sixth category of printed records would include some selected public records of the Home and Foreign Departments concerning the political relations of the Governor-Generals of India. A selection may be made of some important treatises among the vast mass of published recorded literature such as, (1) R. P. Chanda edited *Selections from Official Letters and Records relating to the History of Mayurbhanj*, Vols. 1-3 (Baripada, 1942), K. K. Datta and others edited *Letters to and from the Court of Directors, Fort William - India House Correspondence* in multi-volumes (Delhi, 1958 onwards), G. W. Forrest, *Selection from the State Papers of the Governor-Generals of India, Warren Hastings, Cornwallis* in multi-volumes (Oxford, 1910-26) as well as by the same author *Selections from letters etc., Maratha series* (Calcutta, 1885), *Selections of papers from Foreign Department* in three volumes, 1772-85 (Calcutta, 1890), edited by Rev. J. Long, *Selections from the Unpublished Records of Government from 1748 to 1767 inclusive* in two volumes (Calcutta, 1869), Charles Ross edited *Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis*, 3 volumes (London, 1856), W. S. Seton-Kerr edited *Selections from Calcutta Gazettes (1784-88)* in multi-volumes (Calcutta, 1864), James Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs, etc.* (London, 1834), Harry Verelst, *A View of Rise, Progress and Present State of English Government in Bengal* (London, 1772) and Henry Vansittart, *A Narrative of the Transactions in Bengal (1760-64)*.

3 vols. (London, 1766), and Henry Rickett's, *Selections from the Records of Bengal Government, No. XXX, Cuttack and Midnapur* (Calcutta, 1859) throw significant sidelight on the political and revenue settlements of the Frontier Bengal.

The contemporary literary sources and collected folklore constitute corroborative evidences of the socio-economic history of the region. The authorities of the Sahitya Parishad at Bishnupur and Midnapur have collected palm-leaf manuscripts, land-grants, coins and other archaeological evidences as a scholarly vocation of local scholars. A close examination of the literature would prove that the local litterateurs of the period were busy in works following the medieval literary trends of Bengal. The epics of Dharma cult, the songs of Satyanarayan and poems on the love-dalliance of Radha and Krishna are the stereotyped themes followed by them. It would be futile to collect any data concerning socio-economic life of the rural frontier Bengal. Bishnupur was the seat of the Malla Rajas of Mallabhum and as they were Vaisnavas the Vaisnava poets received patronage from them. Another Vaisnava centre was Sripat Gopiballavpur in the Midnapur district. Land-grants, copperplates, palm-leaf manuscripts in these monasteries throw a flood of light on the religious life of the people. *History of the Santal hool of 1855* by late Babu Digambar Chakravarty of Pakur of Santal parganas written at the beginning of the twentieth century and Ms. no. 2096 in the Ratan Library, Suri, Birbhum (written in 1855) are important sources. For the *bargir hangama* prior to 1751 *Maharashtra Purana* is an important source of information. In the nineteenth century Midnapur produced the literary genius of Vidyasagar, Madan Mohan Tarkalankar. Bankim Chandra, Rajnarain Basu and Arabinda Ghosh came to this region and from their literature and biographical sketches the light on the contemporary urban life could be studied. Nowadays private anthropological organisations and government agencies have collected folklore on the *santhal-hool* and other peasant and tribal resistance movements. But a collected work on the folklore of the region is yet to be published. Cultural Research Institute, S. C. T. Welfare Department of Government of West Bengal have

published some booklets and Bulletins of which mention may be made of *Paschim Bangor Adivasi Loka Sahitya* (in Bengali), edited by A. K. Das and S. Mukhopadhyaya and *Paschim Bangor Adivasi Andolan* by the same authors.

The last category of historical sources would include newspaper sources preserved in the National Library which consist of *Bengal Hurkaru & Chronicle* (1832-33), *The Calcutta Courier* of the relevant years and the *India Gazette* of the relevant years. Some Bengali newspaper sources have been recently published. Brajendralal Bandyopadhyaya edited *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha* in two volumes (Calcutta, 1954) and Benoy Ghosh edited *Samayik Patre Banglar Samaj Chitra* in two volumes (Calcutta, 1962) contain extracts from the Bengali newspapers of the nineteenth century. But these newspapers, valuable for the socio-economic history of Bengal, also contain references to the history of the Frontier Bengal. Moreover, *Asiatic Researches*, *Journal of Asiatic Society of India* and the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, London published many research papers since the eighteenth century which unfold the historical problems of the region.

II

On Midnapur and the Jungle Mahals a vast mass of historical literature has been written since the last half of the eighteenth century. The historiography of the region may be categorised as: (1) the revenue and political history of the region, (2) socio-anthropological study and the ethnic settlements of the people of the region, (3) the peasant resistance movements, and (4) on the dynamics of socio-economic condition of the region. The treatises include the research studies of both the British and Indian historians. In the first category one can name W. W. Hunter's *The Annals of Rural Bengal*, Vol. I (London, 1871) and his introductory chapters on *Bengal Mss. Records* (London, 1894), Vols. 1-4 and *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, twenty volumes (London, 1875-77). The vast Gazetteer literature edited by L. S. S. O'Malley (Calcutta, 1908-11) on each

district of the Frontier Bengal and J. C. Price's *Notes on the history of Midnapur* (Calcutta, 1876), H. V. Bailey's *Memoranda of Midnapur*, 1852 (Calcutta, 1902) and W. K. Firminger edited *Introduction to the Fifth Report*, 1812 (Calcutta, 1817, reprinted *Indian Studies*, 1962) may be cited as typical examples. The books are the outcome of painstaking labour of the civilian administrators, meant for the future generation of district administrators who would have no previous historical knowledge of the districts they would be called upon to rule.

The Indian authors also followed their beaten tracks. Narendralal Khan wrote *History of the Midnapur Raj* (Midnapur, 1905), Trailokyanath Paul's *Narayangarer Rajbansha* (Medinipur, B.S. 1293) and *Medinipur Itihas* (Kanthi, B.S. 1332) are of great importance as the political and revenue history of the region include territories beyond the modern district of Midnapur. But these books are mainly inspired and corroborated by the Gazetteer literature and studies of the British authors and are as such conspicuous by their total absence of anti-British viewpoints. A recent publication by N. N. Das, *History of Midnapur*, three vols. (Medinipur, 1962-74) on the other hand, highlights freedom movements in Midnapur in different phases of her modern history. Recently in Ranchi University and in the University of Burdwan some scholars have studied political and revenue history of different localities of the Frontier Bengal, some of which have been published. *Civil Rebellion of Frontier Bengal* (Calcutta, 1964) by B. S. Das is a typical example. Some studies on the socio-anthropological problems of the Frontier Bengal, particularly on the ethnic settlements have been undertaken by the scholars. We can mention here alphabetically the names of authors and the titles of some of the books they wrote: (1) Bradley Birt, F. B., *Chota-nagpur, a little known province of the Empire* (London, 1910), E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), V. H. Elwin, *The Aborigines* (Bombay, 1942), H. H. Risley, *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, two vols. (Calcutta, 1892) and Kumar Suresh Singh, *The Dust-storm and Hanging Mists* (Calcutta, 1966) are the socio-anthropological studies of the civilian historians of the region. P. K. Bhowmic, *The Lodhas of West Bengal* (Calcutta, 1963), G. S.

Ghurye, *The Scheduled Tribes*, (2nd ed., Bombay, 1959) and G. Griffith's *The Kol Tribe of Central India* and Sarat Chandra Roy's *The Mundas and their country*. (Calcutta, 1912) and *The Oraons of Chhotanagpur* (Ranchi, 1915) may be mentioned.

In the third category peasant resistance movements written by the Indian authors may be included. The first attempt was made by S. B. Chaudhuri, *Civil Disturbances during the British rule in India, 1765-1857* (Calcutta, 1955) and K. K. Datta, three books—*Unrest against British rule in Bihar, 1831-1850* (Patna, 1957), *History of Freedom Movement in Bihar* (Patna, 1957) and *The Santal Insurrection* (Calcutta, 1940) were followed by J. C. Jha, *The Kol Insurrection of Chhotanagpur* (Calcutta, 1964) and *the Bhumij Revolt* (Delhi, 1967) ; B. S. Das wrote two books on the Chuar revolt, namely *Civil Rebellion on the Frontier Bengal* (Calcutta, 1974) and *Jungle Mahal O Medinipurer Gana Bikshov* (in Bengali ; Medinipur, 1968), and V. Raghavaiah wrote *Tribal Revolts* (Nellore, 1971). These books highlighted different facets of the tribal peasant uprisings consequent to the British revenue experiments on the people. In Bengali some recent research studies have been published : (1) Bhabani Sen, *Banglay Tebhaga Andolan, Nirbachita Rachanasangraha*, 2nd vol. (Calcutta, 1977), Dharendra Nath Baske, *Saontal Gana Sangramer Itihas* (Calcutta, 1976), Gopinath Sen, *Swadhinata Andolane Adibasider Bhumika* (Calcutta, 1975), and Suprakash Roy, *Bharater Krishak Bidroha O Ganatantrik Sangram* (Calcutta, 1966) deserve mention. Some of the authors of the peasant movements have taken Marxist interpretation of history while others criticised their Marxist viewpoint. But all the books combined together would give a graphic picture of the peasant revolts of the region followed by British revenue exploitation over them.

In the last category we may mention some research treatises on the socio-economic condition on the then Frontier Bengal. Ramesh Dutt's *The Economic History of India under Early British Rule* (London, 1956) is an attempt to analyse the general trends of socio-economic forces of the period, K. K. Datta's *Survey of India's Social Life and Economic condition in the Eighteenth Century, 1707-1813* (Calcutta, 1961), *Studies in the History of*

Bengal Subah, 1740-70 (Calcutta, 1936) and N. K. Sinha's *Economic History of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1956-63) in three volumes deserve mention. Binay Chaudhuri's *Growth of Commercial Agriculture in Bengal*, Vol. I (Calcutta, 1964) and N. K. Sinha's (edited) *History of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1956) throw flood of light on the socio-economic condition of the Jungle and Nimki Mahals of the Frontier Bengal.

III

I have mentioned four categories of historical treatises. It would be futile to find a single book which makes a comprehensive study of all the available sources. Recently new series of District Gazetteers are going to be published. It is expected that the editors would incorporate the results of new researches on the field. *Paschim Bange Adivasi Andolan* edited by A. K. Das and S. Mukhopadhyaya published by Scheduled Castes and Tribes Welfare Department (Calcutta, 1977) is an attempt in that direction. The scholars like Surajit Sinha (*State Formation and Rajput Myth in Central India, Man in India*, XIII, No. 2, 1961). Binay Chaudhuri in many research papers have tried to bridge the gap in the field of historical research of the region. But by and large the nineteenth century was a neglected period for the historians of the Frontier Bengal which witnessed the crisis in the agrarian economy, depeasantisation of the primary producers and collapse of the traditional leadership to assume the role of entrepreneurs to rejuvenate the economy. The historians are yet to take up the task of analysing the causes of decline of the agrarian economy and the rise of nationalist movement leading to emergence of political radicalism of the rural middle class. The recorded evidences in the Judges courts and Collectorate record rooms, local newspaper sources and proceedings of the District Boards are yet untapped, and above all, the oral history to be collected from the living octogenarian personalities. New sources of economic data from the district government departments will help focus the unforgotten legends centering round the freedom movement in the Frontier Bengal. While the rural Bengal witnessed

fast declining economy, her urban centres could not witness industrial development despite the protracted developments of the mining districts of Burdwan, Manbhum and Ranchi. The imbalance in economic developments in the post-independence era in Frontier Bengal posed new problems to the modern researchers. The modern historians are yet to take up the politico-economic survey work of the region both from the official and non-official sources strewn over different parts of the region.

AGRARIAN HISTORY OF BENGAL (1880—1980) : SOURCE-MATERIALS

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ONE GREAT DIFFICULTY in writing grassroots history is that peasants have not written about themselves. There are no autobiographies, letters and literary and journalistic works available from this unlettered community. Unlike the elitist history, the scholar has to unravel government agrarian policy papers and writings of the educated elite about them to get to the grassroots. The peasants speak for themselves only once in their evidence before the *Indigo Commission, 1860*. Their names, their hierarchical standing in a village, their hopes and fears, sufferings and sustenance are all available in their own statement. But it did not become a tradition. After a flash, the light went out and there was darkness.

But scholars need not despair. Official documents and elitist writings are not always biased in favour of their authors' class. They had written quite often from their commitment to these primary producers of wealth. Even where they are giving neutral statements and dry statistics, the discerning scholar can always read between the lines and columns of statistics to construct a candid agrarian history. Where contracts like sale-deeds, mortgage papers, rent receipts and court exhibits are available, he can fare even better.

How to begin collecting information about the agrarian scenario and the ordinary people in rural Bengal especially in the crucial nineteenth century? The first things to be taken up are the *District Gazetteers* edited and mostly written by L. S. S. O'Malley in the first quarter of the present century. The

Gazetteers pick up where W. W. Hunter's monumental *Statistical Account of Bengal* (in 20 volumes, London, 1875-76) leave it to keep up a first rate chronicle of rural life in Bengal.

A more in-depth study of agrarian relations was made in the *Settlement Reports of Bengal districts* which were written as and when the first cadastral surveys were completed in our country between 1900 and 1940. Some of the outstanding works are those by J. C. Jack on Bakarganj (1915), Robertson on Bankura (1936), Hill on Burdwan (1940), Ascoli on Dacca (1917) and Bell on Dinajpur (1941). Jack is excellent on zamindari proliferation and plight; Robertson goes deep into the intricacies of share cropping; Hill and Ascoli notice the rise of the jotedars at the expense of the zamindars and Bell is most graphic in his treatment of grain trade and its beneficiaries, the jotedars and their *modus operandi*.

The next in line are the censuses beginning from the period under review. The census of 1900-01 was the product of reliable data processing and by far the most outstanding of the series. The same high level of information and analysis was resumed since 1950-51 when censuses began having monographs and enclosures to analyse the data marshalled in the census. But the whole series is invaluable for quantification of various strata of the agrarian sector, decade by decade. The authors of the censuses are not conscious of the differentiation that had taken place in the peasantry of Bengal. They hardly distinguish between the share-croppers and the small peasants but they write about agricultural wage-labour. They inform a lot about rural migration from districts and neighbouring provinces into metropolitan Calcutta and the emergence of an industrial labour-force. Occupation and caste break-ups of various sections of people are given in minute details. A similar running series is the *Moral and Material Progress Report* from the beginning of our period which supplement the Census in many ways for the twentieth century. Commercial information contained within especially for the depression period of the thirties should be valuable. One can embark on the reports of the various commissions of enquiry at this stage. The most remarkable are the *Reports of the Famine Commissions*, especially of 1880, 1901 and 1946 which are veritable gold-mines

of information on the mode of production, rural surplus and scarcity, land-holding, family structure and the standard of living of the lowest and most depressed classes in rural Bengal.

The Report of the Rent Law Commission (1880) provides the agrarian framework and the *Bengal Tenancy Act Papers* (1885) reveal the tapestry of the feudal structure and the principles of determination of rent in rural Bengal. For a close look at the standard of living of the lower classes in Bengal is that invaluable report, *An Enquiry into the Condition of the Lower Classes in Bengal* known also as *Dufferin Enquiry of 1888*. For the period, 1880-1900, there is that precious series, 'Twenty Years' Statistics', giving statistical abstracts of most of the government departments. The statistics of the Registration Department give a unique record of land transfers with columns to show who lost land to whom and how. The record of land transfer is continued for the twentieth century in the annual and triennial reports of the Registration Department but these columns are dropped irreparably for the scholar of agrarian change.

The most important corpus of information for the period, 1890-1910 is contained in a brilliant report by K. L. Datta on the *Enquiry into the Impact of the Rise of Prices in India*, compiled for the Government of India in 1914.

It reads like an encyclopaedia of rural economics dealing with land and cropped area, agricultural prices, export and import trade in cash crops, agricultural income and expenditure, rural credit and indebtedness. It is the most exhaustive and comprehensive agrarian history of the period, using index numbers for sophisticated quantification purposes.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture (1928) is the next milestone for path-finding in the agrarian history of Bengal in the twentieth century. It gives interesting details of the mode of production, productivity and inputs.

The core of the rural problem is laid bare in another series of documents entitled the *Report of the Bengal Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee* (1929-30) which pries into rural indebtedness and its causes. It gives valuable statistics on the nature of rural credit and its agencies, debtor-creditor relations, mortgages

and foreclosures, commercial agriculture and its impact on rural indebtedness. It is supplemented by the papers of the *Debt Settlement Board* (1930-35) which throws significant light on the polarisation of landed and agricultural wealth between the kulaks and the rural proletariat. Those interested in crop and productivity studies will be rewarded by studying the *Crop and Season Reports* for the thirties and forties and the Report of the *Bengal Jute Enquiry Committee* (1934).

In 1940, the *Report of the Bengal Land Revenue Commission*, also known as the *Floud Commission* from its chairman's name was published in five parts. It is a classic store-house of information on agrarian Bengal. It looks into agrarian structure, land transfer, rent question, mode of production and productivity, impact of cash crops like jute and especially stresses of land-man ratio, share cropping and growing rural pauperisation. The volumes also present social interaction among zamindars, lawyers, kisan sabhas and officials giving a rare insight into the working of Bengal agrarian relations. Close at its heels was published the *Famine Enquiry Commission* or the *Woodhead Commission Report* (1945-46), mainly enquiring into the Bengal Famine of 1943. But it gives more than food shortage, rise of goods prices and rural impoverishment. It gives the outline of a gradual impoverishment of various economic groups in rural Bengal due to factors other than the rise of good prices and low productivity.

A major attempt at a micro-study of agrarian questions was made in the report of the *Ishaque Commission* (1946) by the method of plot to plot enumeration and inventory of rural households. It can be tapped for an understanding of interlaced land-holding on ownership and operational basis. The patchwork nature of ryoti holdings and the role of share-croppers in a rural economy of low equilibrium can be gleaned from the report. In 1955 fresh survey and settlement reports came out bringing out the picture of land economy after the abolition of zamindari and the jotedar-bargadar-kishan syndrome. The approach of Green Revolution, credit crisis and its consequences were measured in the reports of the *All India Rural Credit Survey for Eastern India* (1954), conducted by the Reserve Bank of India. These

reports can be read together with *National Sample Survey Reports (1951 up to date)* for a regional break-up of development and destitution. The sacrifice of a peasant economy or its survival is the question to be thrashed out with the help of these reports. The peculiar problem of persistence of bargadars can be studied in the Government Report, *Bargadar and his Problems (1957)* which tries to quantify bargadars in district break-up and discusses the problems of their enfranchisement for survival. *Papers relating to Operation Barga (1978-80)* round out this story of survival economics.

The printed primary sources can be backed up by archival material at the State Archive. The Board of Revenue Proceedings, Commercial Proceedings, Agriculture, Irrigation, Forest, Health, P.W.D., Railways and Local Self-Government Departmental Proceedings contain valuable information. Road Cess returns since 1876 give the break up of incidence in the rural sector and thereby provide an inkling of the distribution of wealth in rural Bengal.

In the district collectorate record-rooms, primary documents of sale, purchase, mortgage, tenancy and entitlement deeds involving all sectors of rural society are readily available with personal details. The Khanapuri-Bujharat papers are treasure-troves of grassroots history plot by plot. In the collectorates and also the police stations, intimate village records are available, though these documents have not been carefully preserved in a series. Forest settlement offices remain virgin depositories for tribal history in districts like Purulia and Midnapur. Attention may also be drawn to the exhibits in the Registration Department in the Alipur office as also in the districts which store all kinds of deeds affecting rural life.

Needless to say, courtroom exhibits and briefs contain valuable information on property relations between suitors. The High Court Bar Library has in its custody excellent material of this kind but mostly dealing with the urban sector. The Zillah Court Decisions from the 1850's, 'the Great Rent Cases', etc. are invaluable. Besides these, party documents on the agrarian questions also merit scrutiny. The Proceedings of the Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha at the Ajoy Bhavan, New Delhi provide a very

interesting set of documents for an analysis of political mobilisation of Bengal peasants. To evaluate a peasant revolt like the Tebhaga Struggle, these records are indispensable. A similar material is the *Report of the Congress Agrarian Committee (1949)* for the agrarian policy of the ruling party.

Last but not the least, memoirs, books, articles, newspapers, and periodicals can provide materials to cross-verify official documents and help to bridge many a gap in records. The value of works by Rev. Lalbehari Dey and R. C. Dutta on 'Bengal Peasant Life', Sanjib Chatterjee's 'Bengal Ryots' and A. C. Das's 'Indian Ryot' are examples of this kind. 'Rayater Katha' by Pramatha Chaudhuri and 'Banglar Chasi' in the *Visva-Vidyasangraha* series are similar works of importance for a later period. Newspapers and periodicals like the 'Sadharani' by Akshoychandra Sarkar, 'Sanjibami' by Krishnakumar Mitra, 'Nabasakti' by Naresh Sengupta and 'Langal' by Muzaffar Ahmed, etc. all are instances of agrarian journalism of high order.

It may be pointed out in conclusion that a large number of village survey reports prepared by the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, the Anthropological Survey of India, the Socio-Economic Research Institute, Calcutta and the Agro-Economic Research Institute, Santiniketan should provide a good basis for an understanding of agrarian structure and change in Bengal in the twentieth century.

SOURCES OF THE INDUSTRIAL HISTORY OF BENGAL IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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THE sources of the industrial history of Bengal in the nineteenth century should be related to the scope of the subject. It seems that the focus of enquiry should turn on the supply of capital and labour, role of Indian capital. Government policy and industrial organization. The growth of modern industry hardly started in the first half of the nineteenth century. It was the period of de-industrialization. The handicrafts of Bengal which had attained an advanced level of development in the past had decayed and were decaying along with the centres of production. By the close of the eighteenth century the agency houses had become dominant in Bengal's economy and controlled internal and coastal trade, banking and insurance, and invested in indigo manufacture. In 1833 the agency houses collapsed, and the managing agents stepped into their shoes. The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the beginnings of an important shift in the economic situation which was evident in the growth of modern industry. The construction of railways started in 1853; limited liability was introduced in 1857, and joint-stock enterprise began to make headway towards the close of the century.

We now turn to the classification of sources. Private papers of industrialists, merchants and managing agency firms are not readily available. In fact, managing agency firms have consistently refused to allow research students to consult their records. Professor John Broomfield discovered the Sahana papers in Bankura district, which throw light on the economic enterprise of the Sahana family from the 1880's. (J. Broomfield, 'The Rural

Parvenu', *South Asian Review*, 1973). While the search for private papers should continue, the research student will have to rely on a wide range of sources that include records, reports, District Gazetteers, contemporary newspapers. It is worth noting that Calcutta High Court records are useful for the first half of the nineteenth century, particularly on Indian economic enterprise. *Bharatiya Baparionka Parichaya* (Calcutta Division; Commercial Publishing House, Indore, 1929) presents a descriptive account of Burrabazar-based Marwari firms from the 1840's. Archive records are very useful, but the research student should not fail to draw on contemporary newspapers and reports of business organisations. The sources of industrial enterprise in Bengal can be classified as follows :

1. ARCHIVE RECORDS :

INDIA OFFICE LIBRARY, London,

- Bengal : *Financial Letters and Enclosures*, 1807 — 1848.
- Bengal : *Commercial Reports*, 1800 — 1833.
- Secret Commercial Drafts*, 1815 — 1831.
- Secret Commercial Committee Minutes*, 1815 — 1834.
- Bengal : *Judicial Consultations*.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES, New Delhi.

- Financial Proceedings*, 1811 — 1848.
- Commerce Department : *Coal and Iron* (1882 — 1900).
- Commerce Department : *Industries* (1863 — 1914).
- Commerce Department : *Stores* (1887 — 1914).
- Finance Department : *Despatches to and from the Secretary of State* (1858 — 1900).

STATE ARCHIVES, West Bengal.

- Proceedings of the Board of Trade*, from 1800 onwards.
- Proceedings of the General Department*, 1835 — 1838.
- Marine Department Proceedings*, 1859 — 1885.
- General Department : *Proceedings of the Lieutenant-Governors from 1859 onwards*.
- Proceedings of Revenue and Agriculture Department*, 1880 — 1900.

2. OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS :

- W. R. Dunstan, *Report on the coal supply of India*, 1898
 R. H. Mahon, *Report upon the Manufacture of Iron and Steel in India*, 1899.
 G. L. Mokesworth, *Notes on Iron Manufacture*, 1882
Papers regarding Tea Industry in Bengal, 1873.
 J. Grindy, *Report of the Inspection of Mines in India*, 1897.
 J. G. Cumming, *Report on the Industries of Bengal*, 1908
Annual Reports on the Working of Indian Companies Act, 1882 — 1913.
Report of the Indian Industrial Commission, 1916 — 18.
Evidence, vols. 1 — 4.
 Census Reports from 1872 onwards.

3. REPORTS, BROCHURES :

- Annual Reports of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce*, 1854 — 1900
Annual Reports of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, 1887 — 1900.
Annual Reports of the Indian Jute Mills' Association, 1885 — 1900
The Martin Burn Story, 1961.
Andrew Yule and Company, 1964
 G. Harrison, *Bird and Company*, 1964.

4. NEWSPAPERS, JOURNALS :

- Bengal Harkara*, 1824 — 1848
Hindu Patriot, 1820 — 1885
The Capital, 1854 — 1900
The Statesman, 1875 — 1900.
 Brojendranath Bandopadhyay, *Sambad Patre Sekaler Katha on Bengali*, 2 vols.
 Benoy Choudhury, *Sambad Patre Banglar Samaj Chitra (in Bengali)*, 3 vols.

The Bengal District Gazetteers often deal with local industries that had survived over the years, for instance, brick and tile factories, rice mills, flour mills, printing presses, saw mills, oil mills,

tanneries, metal and engineering workshops. Canning writes briefly on some of these industries that gave employment to local artisans and labourers. The Census Reports (from 1882 onwards) generally deal with these industries.

It has been noted already that the role of the managing agency firms should figure prominently in the story of industrial enterprise in Bengal. R. E. Enthoven prepared a note on the Managing Agents (Commerce and Industry Department, *Companies*, 1913, National Archives). This document also throws light on the abuses that had crept in the managing agency system in Bengal and Bombay. Blair King, *piece*, 'The Origin of the Managing Agency System in India', *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 26, November 1960, is based on the papers of Carr, Lugg and Co. Dr. Rungta has drawn on the *Friend of India* (1871-73) and the memorandum of Registrar Joint Stock Companies to the Bengal Government, 1881. Dr. Rungta tells us that it is difficult to write on the managing agency system in Calcutta for lack of material (R. S. Rungta, *The Rise of Economic Corporation In India, 1851-1900*, 1970, ch. 12). The researchers should try to have access to the papers of the managing agency firms, notably Andrew Yule, Shaw-Walker, Bisset Lawrie, Octavius Steel, Duncan Brothers.

On industrial policy the financial despatches to and from the Secretary of State (which have already been referred to) offer important material. The Report of the States Committee, 1906 (Industries and Labour Department, *Confidential Series*, 1906, National Archives) is very useful for the study of government purchase and its impact on the engineering firms. The evidence of merchants and manufacturers (see the Report, vol. 2) refers to the production and labour force of Burn, Jessop, K. L. Mukherjee and Co. The Report of the Industrial Commission (1916-18) which will survive and outline many other official reports presents a review of industrial policy and the role of the managing agents who could not be helpful in clearing the way for continuous industrial progress.

For the role of Indian capital we have to rely on contemporary newspapers, reports of Bengal National Chamber of

Commerce, private papers, reports of joint stock companies and biographies. The Sahana papers discovered by Broomfield have been referred to. The files of joint stock companies are available at the office of the Registrar of Companies, Calcutta. A few biographies have been published, such as : Kishori Chand Mitra, *Mutty Lal Seal* ; Blair Kling, *Dwarkanath Tagore* ; M. Gupta, *Prafulla Chandra Ray* ; K. C. Mahindra, *Sir Rajendra Nath Mukherjee* ; G. D. Birla, *In the Shadow of the Mahatma—A Personal Memoir*. Cooke's book, *The Rise, Progress and Present Condition of Banking in India* (1863) is still useful.

The material on labour supply and the size and structure of the labour force is scanty and scattered. Foley's *Report on Labour in Bengal*, 1906 is useful for a connected account of the labour force. The files of *Bharat Shramajibi*, the first labour journal founded by Sasipada Banerjee in 1874 (Dr. K. L. Chatterjee has discovered and edited these files, see *Bharat Shramajibi*, Calcutta, 1975) describe labour conditions in the jute mills. The Reports of Inspectors of Mines (1890-1900), Proceedings of the Factory Commission, 1890 (Home Judicial, March, 1891, National Archives) and Census Reports deal with the size and social composition of the labour force.

Now the utilisation of the source-material. It should be said that research in economic history has at present become intensive and books and articles on different aspects of Bengal's industrial evolution in the nineteenth century have been published. Dr. Tripathi presents the best account of the rise and fall of the agency houses in Bengal (A. Tripathi, *Trade And Finance in the Bengal Presidency, 1793-1833*, 1956). Dr. Ghosal has described the decay of Bengal's handicrafts in early nineteenth century (H. R. Ghosal, *Economic Transition in the Bengal Presidency, 1793-1833*, 1965). Relying mainly on High Court records Dr. Sinha tells the story of Indo-British economic enterprise and the frustration suffered by Bengali merchants and landlords (N. K. Sinha, *The Economic History of Bengal*, vol. 3, 1793-1848, 1970). The present writer deals, briefly and in passing, with railway workshops, ordnance factories, engineering industry, coal and mica mines, jute mills, tea gardens and tanneries in Bengal ; the emphasis is on Government policy and

economic organization (S. K. Sen, *Industrial Policy and Development of India*, 1858-1914, 1964; *Economic Policy and Development in India*, 1848-1926, 1966). Dr. Rungta throws much new light on joint stock enterprise in Bengal and the managing agency system (R. S. Rungta, *The Rise of Business Corporations In India*, 1851-1900, 1970). Dr. P. Banerjee has traced the growth of Marwari firms in *Calcutta and Its Hinterland*, 1833-1900, 1975. For tea industry S. K. Bose's *Capital and Labour in the Indian Tea Industry*, 1954 is useful. Dr. C. P. Simons has written a paper, 'Indigenous Enterprise in the Coal Mining Industry, 1835-1939' (*Indian Economic and Social History Review*, April-June, 1976). Dr. S. Mukherjee's piece, 'Emergence of Bengali Entrepreneurship in Tea Plantation, 1879-1933' (*Economic and Social History Review*, October-December, 1976) is interesting. For the size and structure of the labour force in Bengal's industries, Dr. P. S. Gupta's 'Notes on the Origin and Structuring of the Industrial Labour Force, 1880-1920' (published in R. S. Sharma edited *Indian Society: Historical Probing*s, 1974) and Mr. R. Das Gupta's 'Factory Labour in Eastern India, 1855-1946' (published in *Economic and Social History Review*, July-September, 1976) are useful.

As this brief survey indicates a good deal of serious work has been done in the past two decades, yet much work remains to be done. There has been very little research, for instance, on small-scale industries, behaviour pattern of the Indian capitalist class and the emergence of the labour force in Bengal in the nineteenth century. What is surprising is that a documented survey of Bengal's industrial development in the second half of the nineteenth century, incorporating the most recent research, has not yet been published. Last but not the least, the researcher should read carefully the secondary works which have mostly grown out of doctoral dissertations and try to formulate questions that need to be asked to focus on the problems of Bengal's industrial growth.

SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF TRADE AND COMMERCE IN BENGAL : EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

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IN the historical context of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the term Bengal denoted a wider connotation than is now understood. It covered a wide geographical area comprising Bengal proper, Bihar and portions of Orissa. In the eighteenth century it was synonymous with what was known in the Mughal administrative framework as the Bengal Subah. But in this paper the expression Bengal has been used in a rather restrictive sense and not in the historical sense of the term. It is actually the erstwhile province of Bengal, leaving out modern Bihar and Orissa, that has been studied under the purview of the present paper. Secondly, the term trade and commerce is a blanket term applied to three different areas of study, namely, internal trade, coastal trade and external commerce. A discussion of the sources of each of these areas separately may lead to overlapping and consequent confusion. Therefore, the micro-approach to such a discussion has been avoided. Thirdly, one initial shortcoming is indicated. Mainly those materials which are available in India, have been dealt with and occasional references have been given to the sources found abroad. One great advantage to the scholars dealing with trade and commerce of Bengal since 1765 is that the East India Company have left behind a vast resource of important documents which are very comprehensive in nature and neatly arranged. It is well-known that the East India Company's records are perhaps the finest series of its kind in modern times ; and most of these materials are available in India. So far as Bengal is concerned, the archi-

val sources are available at two main centres—West Bengal State Archives, and National Archives, New Delhi. Other subsidiary centres will be referred to later in appropriate places.

Any fruitful discussion of the sources of trade and commerce in Bengal in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is related to the peculiarities of the problem in different periods of time—each period having a character of its own. Therefore, a resume of the problem in several segments must be attempted before one dives into the sources. The history of the trade and commerce in Bengal in the modern period may be discussed under three broad phases : (1) Period of country control over trade and commerce, 1701-1764 ; (2) Period of confusion and decline, 1765-1836 ; (3) Period of colonial strangulation. Each phase had derived its characteristic features from the power structure in Bengal which cast deep shadows on the history of trade and commerce in particular and the economic structure in general.

I. *Period of Country Control*

Taken as a whole the history of Bengal in the eighteenth century is a record of transition from the old order to the new—a process that ultimately affected the whole course of Indian history. During the century, Bengal stood between two momentous changes. On the one hand, it witnessed the disappearance of the traditional country force and on the other, it saw the emergence of an alien force that engulfed the whole subcontinent in the long run. During the period, the economy of the province ran in the traditional style within the Mughal administrative framework. It was a *closed economy*, otherwise known as 'self-sufficient village economy'. Notwithstanding the apparent economic prosperity of the early eighteenth century, there existed a state of things, according to Charles Trevelyan, "in which everybody is obliged to produce and manufacture everything he requires for his own consumption".¹ Trade and commerce was carried on in the traditional pattern hampered by *Sayer* and other inland duties and by the bad state of roads and lines of communication. Industries which are actually feed-points of trade and commerce, flourished in localised areas under the village system. The system of credit and banking was not much developed. The

currency system was complicated and productive of exaction. Despite these imperfections trade and commerce went on without any significant dislocation except in certain years due to political confusion, as in the case of Maratha invasions during the rule of Alivardi and the protectorate over the Nawab of Bengal after the battle of Plassey. By and large, the control of the sovereign Nawab over trade and commerce in Bengal was maintained till the battle of Plassey. Erosion of the country control took place gradually after 1757; but it gathered momentum after 1760 and thereafter, it was like hurtling downhill till 1765 when the country control withered away completely.

Murshid Kuli Khan was brought to Bengal by Aurangzeb in 1701 as Dewan and was later promoted to the position of Subahdar. His period marked the high water-mark of Mughal administrative authority in the province. His greatest credit was to establish order and control that had been so necessary for the prosperity of trade and commerce. He could also hold the fortune-seeking European Companies in check, and never allowed them to meddle in the affairs of Bengal. His successors Sujaud-din and Sarfaraz as well as Alivardi could maintain the control of the country power over trade and commerce. But meanwhile, the Mughal empire itself was in doldrums particularly since 1739, setting forces of disintegration in motion, Bengal was not immune to these forces for long. A serious dislocation of trade and commerce in Bengal took place when the Marathas carried on systematic raids for nearly a decade since 1742. The Treaty of 1751 established political peace with the Marathas no doubt, but it could not place the commercial operations in Bengal in its proper gear. It can be said that the decline of trade and commerce in the province started before Plassey from which it could not recover again.

One interesting feature of the pre-Plassey days was the growing political interests of the European Trading Companies, particularly the English. Farruk-Siyar's Farman of 1717 gave the English a preferential treatment in respect of external commerce both by land and by water (*biyarand wa bi-burand*). They were exempted from paying the *rahdari* or

transit duties in return for a deposit of a fixed sum of rupees 3,000/- only per annum to the State treasury. The Farman has been rightly called the 'Magna Carta' of English trade and commerce in Bengal in the eighteenth century.² It is debatable whether the Farman had actually any extra-territorial right to the English; but it is clear that armed with Farruk-Siyar's Farman of 1717 the East India Company gradually dominated the trade and commerce of the province at the cost of their rivals—the French and the Dutch. As years rolled on, the English tried to usurp the privileges granted to them under the Farman to other spheres like internal trade which was never intended to be covered by the spirit of the Farman.

The history of the next half a century after the grant of Farruk-Siyar's Farman was actually the history of a tussle between the English and the successive Nawabs of Bengal—the former trying to penetrate the body-politic of Bengal through it and the latter trying unsuccessfully to prevent it. The investment of the English East India Company increased steadily and by 1757 they became an important factor in the economy of the province. In spite of strenuous efforts of the Bengal Nawabs from Murshid Kuli to Sirajuddaulah, the slow but gradual penetration of the English could not be held. The Treaty of Alinagar, 9th February, 1757, between the English and Sirajuddaulah was the starting point of the surrender of the country control over trade and commerce in Bengal by several stages till it was complete when the Grant of Dewani was obtained by Clive in 1765 from Shah Alam II, the helpless Mughal Emperor. Thus, cracks did appear in the economy of the province before the battle of Plassey. These cracks, however, widened when the English established a virtual protectorate after the downfall of Siraj. Concessions were actually eating into the vitals of the trade and commerce. The English had been able to destroy the political as well as commercial challenge of the French and the Dutch in 1757 and 1759 respectively. After Plassey there began a large-scale invasion of the trade and commerce in Bengal, particularly the internal trade at the exclusion of all others. Mir Jafar's regime marked a turning-point in the history of trade and commerce in Bengal. His *General Sunnud* of 15th July, 1757 may be said to be a

capitulation document which opened the flood-gate of penetration of the English corrupting the entire commercial life. Even the authority of the Nawab was violated, and the native merchants of Bengal somehow maintained a perilous existence. The abuse of the Farman privilege became by itself a show of might of the British flag. Mirjafar made no attempt or rather was powerless to make any attempt to check the abuses and to ensure country control over trade and commercial operations in Bengal.

A great financier himself, Mir Kasim at once stood face to face with the abuses of the trade privileges of the English. Far from being minimised the difficulties regarding the internal trade of Bengal increased from year to year. Unauthorised private inland trade of the Company's merchants and *gomastahs* had become an usual practice. The honest country traders were being crushed down and the revenues of the Nawab declined day by day. The most serious thing was the violation of the authority of the Nawab. Mir Kasim started considering the activities of the English merchants from the political angle. When protestations did not yield any result, the Nawab made up his mind to crush the trade of the English in an indirect manner. He could see that the entire fabric of English trade prosperity rested on the preferential advantages under the Farman of 1717. He applied the masterly stroke of practical intelligence in March, 1763 when he ordered the total remission of all internal duties in Bengal. It only remains to say that Mir Kasim had to pay the penalty for his 'noble generosity' by losing the *masnad* of Bengal in 1764. The exit of Mir Kasim did not offer any tangible solution of the confused state of things in the field of trade and commerce. But it gave a lesson to the English. The serious limitation and the ultimate futility of the experiment with the 'protectorate' as a means to an end had become clear. The political farsight of Clive could immediately visualise that a 'partnership in administration' would be perhaps the best method to ensure the growth of the English power in Bengal. He applied for the *Dewani* which was ungrudgingly granted by the Mughal Emperor on 12th August, 1765. In the words of Firminger, the Company became 'the zamindar of the Bengal Subah'. But in reality it

meant something more than that in respect of trade and commerce in Bengal. Needless to say, a new chapter was opened in the history of Bengal trade and commerce in the eighteenth century. The era of country control was over but the confusion was worse confounded in the following years. From the above mentioned description one can easily find that contemporary Persian as well as Bengali sources would occupy an important position along with other foreign source-materials in the story of the reconstruction of trade and commerce in Bengal ; and these would be discussed at a later stage.

II. *Period of Confusion and Decline, 1765-1836*

After the 'Grant of Dewani' in 1765, the Company was no longer an alien force vis-a-vis Bengal at least from the constitutional point of view. The economic destiny of Bengal was henceforward directly guided by the Company. But initially the East India Company was neither interested nor thought it necessary to assume responsibility of economic administration. Naib Nazim Md. Reza Khan was a sort of proxy for the Company. During the era of dual government between 1765 and 1772, power was divorced from responsibility and the arrangement was convenient for the Company until the great Famine of 1770 gave them a rude shock. It was during this period that confusion was worst confounded in the sphere of trade and commerce in Bengal. The administrative settlements of Clive could only touch the tip of the iceberg of corruption in the sphere of internal trade. But so far as coastal trade in general and external commerce in particular was concerned, a definite swing from competition to monopoly had taken place in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. After the Company stood forth as Dewan both in name and in practice in 1772, in their own interest they started to make the state clean and to regulate matters according to their own convenience. Some order was restored and the trade and commerce in Bengal had begun to look up by the nineties of the eighteenth century. It was at this stage a new factor appeared in the shape of the industrial revolution in England. With all its defects the old economy had suited the needs and conditions of Bengal admirably well. But the waves of industrial revolution seriously

dislocated once again the trade and commerce in Bengal. Under its impact a gradual breakdown of the old structure of trade and commerce began after 1793. This was evident from the change in the direction of investment of the East India Company and the manufactured goods, particularly cotton piece-goods, gradually disappeared from the investment list yielding place to raw materials for the British manufactories. Between 1793 and 1833 Bengal ran through a full cycle of economic transition before the penetration of industrial capitalism could be complete. The economic stranglehold of colonialism became a reality after 1836 when fragmented markets were integrated on the abolition of the internal trade barriers in the Bengal Presidency.

It is no wonder that since the industrial revolution in England, the history of the trade and commerce in Bengal was replete with the determined efforts of British commercial capital to open up the province for the private British merchants. Tension began to appear since the close of the eighteenth century in the relationship between the Company and the mother country. So long as the economic interests of the Crown and the Company did not clash, not much attention was paid to the activities of the East India Company in India. The Company was primarily concerned with commerce and profit and used to consider Bengal as a vast estate. The profits were withdrawn from India and deposited in England which in its turn created a jealousy in the minds of the English politicians who had been alarmed at the money power of the 'Bengal Nawabs'. In the beginning of the nineteenth century the Company was considered as an uncomfortable cushion whose economic interests must be dissolved at the earliest. The abolition of the Company's trade exclusiveness under the Charter Act of 1833 was nothing but a registration of accomplished facts. It did not, however, mean the end of exploitation; rather it began a new phase of colonial penetration making the economy of this country totally subservient to that of imperial England.

Trade and commerce in Bengal till 1836 languished under several impediments—internal customs barriers, archaic system of communications and a peculiar metrical confusion. Of them the internal customs barriers in the shape of Transit and Town duties

deserve special mention in respect of this paper. The internal customs barriers rendered the free entry into the market almost impossible. Under their burden trade in Bengal had been languishing since the second half of the eighteenth century. In 1789 Lord Cornwallis observed: "I am sorry to be obliged to say that agriculture and internal commerce has for many years been gradually declining..."³ Though there was a partial revival of trade in Bengal at the turn of the century, the expectations of the merchants were belied after the 'consolidation of customs' under Regulation IX of 1810. While inter-regional trade was badly hampered by the imposition of Transit duties, regional specialisation was practically impossible due to the bogey of Town duties. Such a state of things was unacceptable to the free merchants from England and pressure was building up on the Company to integrate internal market by abolishing the system. It is interesting to observe that the Company at first tried to maintain the *status quo* as far as possible on the plea of revenue; but the pressure of British commercial capitalism as well as of the Bengal merchants was irresistible. For some time the Company tossed between the ideas of abolition and reform, but in 1836 they gave way. It was an important landmark in the history of trade and commerce in Bengal in the nineteenth century. From the foregoing analysis it will be apparent that the Company's spectre was writ large over the trade and commerce in Bengal. The records of the East India Company naturally form the major bulk of the sources relevant for the history of trade and commerce. The records of the business houses of the period till 1836 are practically non-existent, but contemporary journals and the records of the old zamindar families of Bengal do contain valuable information.

III. *Period of Colonial Strangulation, 1836-1900*

The long debates before the passing of the Charter Act of 1833 which abolished the commercial monopoly of the East India Company, made it abundantly clear how India was going to be affected by the ideas of political economy then prevalent in England. The principles enunciated by Adam Smith influenced the economic thinking in England in the late twenties and

early thirties of the nineteenth century and the ideas of Free Trade gave rise to a new commercial outlook that ran counter to the concept of the East India Company as a separate economic identity. Trade and commerce in Bengal was naturally affected by these economic trends in England. Free trade and free competition became the watchwords of those who wanted to do away with the East India Company not for the sake of the Indian people but for the rising capitalist class in the metropolitan country. It may be debated whether India could be rightly called a colony of England. British India could not have said to occupy the same position as Canada or pre-independent American colonies or Australia. It is interesting that prior to the Interpretation Act of 1889 English statutes carefully guarded themselves against defining a colony. "In reality it is impossible to find an accurate definition to cover the British Empire at all periods, for historical circumstances have varied, and the term 'Colony' has been used in different senses at different dates".⁴ Notwithstanding the dichotomy in the status of British India in the nineteenth century, the country had been exposed to all copy-book colonial practices and policies for the benefit of the ruling country. The colonial onslaught began particularly after 1834 and Bengal provided the classic example of the colonial process. Thus we find that the much-talked-of Free Trade degenerated into a one-way traffic for England in the late seventies and eighties of the nineteenth century. If we look at the impact of the policy of commercial taxation since 1846, we can find that a freedom of trade was granted only to England, and India, or for that matter Bengal, was systematically fleeced in respect of trade and commerce. R. C. Dutt rightly observed: "History does not record a single instance of one people ruling another in the interests of the subject nation".⁵ Bengal came under the shadow of the British colonial interests when the Raj was slowly building up under the aegis of the East India Company. Even when the Company was abolished in 1858, there was not much difference from the point of view of India, as the forces of British colonialism continued to operate with much greater cohesion and thoroughness.

Leaving aside the question whether Bengal derived any great

benefit or not in the concrete economic sense, there was a wide extension of trade and commerce during the period from 1836 to 1900. "Notwithstanding years of occasional set-back, there was, on the whole, an unmistakable record of growth from an annual average of 640.85 lakhs of rupees during the quinquennium which ended in 1834-35, the aggregate value of the total foreign trade of Bengal went up to Rs. 9,430.21 lakhs in the last quinquennium under review (1900-01 to 1904-05). In other words, within the space of about seventy years, the total value of Bengal's trade in merchandise increased fourteen times".⁶ Simultaneously, coastal trade also increased considerably. It may be presumed that the quantum of inland trade had also increased, though exact figures cannot be given as there was no system of recording it properly till the late seventies. A few interesting features may be noted in the history of the trade and commerce in Bengal in the second half of the nineteenth century :

(1) *Change in the trade pattern* with increasing emphasis on staple items like tea, jute and raw cotton. Since the extension of the British control over Assam in 1826, British planters took vigorous interest in the cultivation of tea in the entire sub-Himalayan region stretching from Dibrugarh-Margherita complex through the Assam and Bengal Duars to the Darjeeling area right up to Siliguri. Very soon tea became the principal item of export. After 1860-61 there was a sharp decline in indigo trade and the new pride of place was occupied by jute and raw cotton. The principal items in the import list were the manufactured goods, particularly cotton goods, and engineering materials. (2) *Development of inter-regional trade* took place in rapid strides in the seventies of the last century. Here special mention should be made of trade with Assam through Brahmaputra and Surma Valley and rivers were the principal highways of commerce in this region. When the nineteenth century came to a close, the economy of Assam became complementary to the trade and commerce of Bengal. With the development of the Calcutta port the entire north Indian hinterland came into intimate contact with the course of trade and commerce in Bengal. (3) *Development of trade with neighbouring countries* : Here a special mention must be made of the opening up of a

new extensive market in Lower Burma after its annexation in 1852 and Upper Burma after 1885. Annexation of Burma had become a viable commercial proposition, and commerce with Burma through Calcutta port grew in rapid strides. Trade with the Himalayan kingdoms of Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal increased in volume in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The Reports on the external trade of Bengal with these kingdoms would show the growing pattern of trade during that period.

(4) Another remarkable feature of the history of trade and commerce in Bengal in the nineteenth century was *the establishment and rise of the commercial organisations and trades associations* which played a vital role in the commercial life of the province particularly after the transfer of power in 1858. It was but natural that most of them were non-Indian in composition and character and they became some sort of trustees of the British capitalists in India. Bengal provided a classic example of their operation. Side by side with European commercial organisations and associations like the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce (estd. 1834), the Bengal Chamber of Commerce (1853), Calcutta Jute Fabrics Shippers' Association (1893), etc., Indian organisations and associations were coming up in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The establishment of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce in 1887 reflected the aspirations of the mercantile community in Bengal. "The role of the Bengali merchants during the years 1833-1905 was much more significant than what it became later."⁷ But in the process that role underwent a significant change. "The Bengali banian in the nineteenth century had lost many of the important functions associated with this office in the previous century. He had become a guarantee broker attached to European mercantile firms and covering the bazar risk was his main function. In spite of this restricted sphere of operations, he still exercised considerable influence in the business circles and a few like Mutty Lall Seal were universally recognised and respected for their business acumen and judgement. Many of the noted merchants of the period including Cowasjee Rustomjee had been banians at some stages of their careers. Banians or *mut suddis*, as they sometimes were called, were still a factor to reckon with in the commercial

world of Bengal even during a period when Bengali business houses had tended to ossify into zamindaries or real estate agencies and the descendants of the great merchant princes had degenerated into a rentier class." ⁸ Towards the fag end of the nineteenth century the coming of the Marwaris introduced a new element in the commercial life of Bengal. The rivalry between the Bengali and Marwari merchants raged in full fury in the first two decades of the present century before the Marwaris could elbow out other country rivals and dominate trade and commerce in Bengal.

The above bird's-eye view of the history of trade and commerce in Bengal during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries will help scholars in pinpointing the sources needed for their particular study. The sources may now be discussed under several scientifically arranged heads. A description of every minute detail in respect of sources is not intended here; neither it is desirable to make the list cumbersome in order to give a detailed bibliography of every possible topic of research in the broad field of trade and commerce in Bengal during the last two centuries. A macro-approach to sources has been adopted, and a broad indication to different categories will be enough to any advanced student of the history of Bengal. Moreover, no list of secondary works, even when these are pioneering in nature, has been given as they cannot be included in any discussion of the 'sources' for the history of Bengal's trade and commerce.

A : PERSIAN WORKS

A number of Persian works of the eighteenth century are contemporary sources particularly for the period between 1701 and 1765. Of these works the following are important and relevant to our present study.

1. *Siyar-ul-mutakherin* (completed in 1782 A.D.). It gives us a detailed account of the period 1707-1780 in which Bengal between 1738 and 1780 A.D. occupies an important part. It was translated by Haji Mustafa in 1789 into English. The author of the work, Gulam Husain Khan Tabatabai had a rare historical insight and it was by far the most important and to a great extent reliable account of the time.

2. *Muzaffarnamah* by Karam Ali deals with the history of the Bengal Subah from 1722 to 1773 when Md. Reza Khan was ousted by the English. Portions of it were translated by Jadunath Sarkar and published in *Bengal Past and Present*.

3. *Tarikh-i-Bangala* by Salimullah was written under the order of Vansittart, Governor of Bengal and its first English translation was published in 1788 A.D. by Francis Gladwin. Later, other translated versions have come out. The very fact that it was written as a sort of command performance takes out much of its substance as a reliable historical work. In patches, the communal approach is writ large in the work.

4. *Riyaz-us-Salatin* by Ghulam Husain Salim written during 1786-87 is more a compilation under the command of George Udni who employed him as his Munshi. An English translation of the work was published by the Asiatic Society of Calcutta. It is needless to mention that it is a far less reliable historical account of the period.

5. *Makatib-e-Qasim Ali Khan* is actually a collection of correspondence between Mir Kasim and Vansittart and included *parwanas and akhbars*.

These are the important works which do not, however, exclusively deal with trade and commerce. Nevertheless, they contain valuable materials for the history of trade and commerce in Bengal. One great limitation of these works is that they are not much helpful for a quantitative study of the problem. They are primarily reflective in nature. Where trade and commerce was tangled with the political forces of the time, these works are helpful to understand the inner intricacies of that knot. The English point of view is totally absent from these works which give us only one angle of vision as is usual in historical chronicles.

B : CONTEMPORARY BENGALI WORKS

Some of the Bengali literary works of the time contain useful materials for our study. They are also reflective in nature so far as trade and commerce was concerned and they constitute sources subsidiary in nature.

1. *Maharashtrapuran* by Gangaram is perhaps the most im-

portant work under this category. It is a sort of eye-witness account of the Maratha invasions of Bengal at the time of Alivardi and it was completed by 1751. However, the portion discovered so far is only a part dealing with Maratha invasion till the death of Bhaskar Pandit. This work gives us a clear picture of how and to what extent trade and commerce in Bengal was dislocated by Maratha invasions. One word of caution : in recent years some doubts have been expressed about the authenticity of the account. But, till we get concrete evidence to discard it as fake, there is no reason why it cannot be utilised as a source-material.

2. *Annadamangal* by Bharat Chandra written under the patronage of Maharaja Krishna Chandra of Nadia contains valuable incidental references regarding the economic conditions of Bengal during the mid-eighteenth century.

3. *Sivayana* by Rameswara written about 1750 also refers to important aspects of economic history of the first half of the eighteenth century.

It must be said that the above mentioned Bengali literary works do not constitute any major source-material ; but they cannot be overlooked either.

C : CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS BY EUROPEANS

British and other European officials, travellers, administrators, as well as others left for the posterity some very valuable accounts, reflections, etc. which they wrote as a matter of general interest or under compulsions of the situation in which they found themselves in the eighteenth century. They are very useful sources for the reconstruction of the history of the second half of the eighteenth century. It must be noted that they are not scholarly studies but are rationalisation of the historical experience of their authors. They reflect the mentality and approach of the Europeans to the problems of contemporary Bengal. They present one particular point of view and are not complete either in content or in character. The scholar may have to be on guard before accepting or rejecting the accounts given in them. Of the numerous contemporary European accounts the following are important :

1. *A New History of the Indies*, Capt. Cope, 1758.

2. *Reflections on the Government of Indostan*, Luke Scraftan, 1760.
3. *Memoirs of the Revolutions in Bengal*, John Campbell, 1760.
4. *Memcirs of the Revolutions in Bengal*, W. Watts, 1764.
5. *Interesting Historical Events Relative to the Provinces of Bengal and the Empire of Indostan*, J. Z. Holwell, 1765.
6. *A Narrative of Transactions in Bengal from 1760 to 1764*, H. Vansittart, 1766.
7. *Consideration on Indian Affairs*, W. Bolts, 1772.
8. *A View of the Rise, Progress and Present State of the English Government in Bengal*, H. Verelst, 1772.
9. *India Tracts*, J. Z. Holwell, 1774.
10. *Descriptions of Roads in Bengal and Bihar*, J. Rennell, 1778.
11. *Historical Fragments of the Mogul Empire*, R. Orme, 1805.
12. *Travels in India*, J. B. Tavernier (edited by William Crooke), 1925.
13. *Memoirs*, Jean Baptiste, 1822.
14. *Memoir*, Jean Law (edited by Alfred Martineau), 1913.

D : ARCHIVAL RECORDS

The records of the East India Company as well as those of the British Indian Government since 1858 constitute the greatest single source of the history of trade and commerce in Bengal in the nineteenth century. It is known to all concerned that the records of the East India Company were the finest of their kind in the contemporary world. One may say that, technically speaking, those records had certain imperfections when compared to modern methods of record-keeping. But, nevertheless, in richness and thoroughness none can surpass them. Records following the transfer of Power in India kept up the fine tradition of the earlier period; and together they supply enormous information to the researchers. Fortunately for us, most of those records are available in India in two main repositories—the West Bengal State Archives and the National Archives of India, New Delhi. Records relating to the economic history of the Com-

pany's period are mostly in the custody of the West Bengal State Archives. For the British-Indian period one has also to search primarily in the National Archives.

An idea of these records may be had from the following list :

1. *West Bengal State Archives :*
 - Proceedings of Board of Revenue (Customs)
 - Proceedings of Board of Trade (Customs)
 - Proceedings of Board of Revenue (Commercial)
 - Proceedings of Board of Customs, Salt and Opium (Customs)
 - Proceedings of Separate Revenue Department
 - Proceedings of Finance Department (Separate Revenue)
 - Proceedings of Miscellaneous Revenue Department
 - Proceedings of Revenue Department (Miscellaneous Revenue)
 - Proceedings of Judicial Department (Criminal)
 - Miscellaneous Records Relating to Commerce & Customs
 - Letters to and from the Court of Directors (Separate Revenue and Commercial)
2. *National Archives, New Delhi :*
 - Proceedings of Finance Department (Separate Revenue)
 - Proceedings of Home Department (Miscellaneous)
 - Proceedings of Home Department (Revenue)
 - Proceedings of Legislative Department
 - Proceedings of Home Department (Public)
 - Letters to and from the Court of Directors
 - Letters to and from the Secretary of State
3. *Calcutta High Court :*

The nineteenth century records in the custody of the Calcutta High Court are important supplementary records. The records of the Moyor's Court, the old Supreme Court, the Sadar Dewani and Sadar Nizamat Adalat throw very important light on the economic conditions of Bengal. While adjudicating on disputes, the court cases often reflected on the history of the problem, thus giving valuable information to the readers of these records. But one great difficulty is confronted

by scholars. These records are not properly arranged, nor are they indexed scientifically. The scholar has to rely on a pedestrian style while tackling these records.

4. *Bihar State Archives, Patna :*

It is known that modern Bihar was a part of erstwhile Bengal in the nineteenth century. The records of Bihar Collectorates, especially those of Monghyr and Bhagalpur may be utilised as supplementary sources. Patna Judge's Court records also contain useful materials for trade and commerce in the last century.

E : DISTRICT RECORDS

A huge mass of valuable materials in different Collectorate offices is lying almost untapped. "An almost continuous series of old English Correspondence could be found only in the district of Midnapore".⁹ W. K. Firminger edited a few volumes of district records of Chittagong, Dinajpur, Midnapur, Rangpur and Sylhet. A few more selection-volumes have been published recently. But they could touch only a fringe of the huge mass of materials stored in the Collectorates. Recently, there has been a growing awareness about the importance of district records. They are indispensable for micro-studies in trade and commerce. "These records throw some light on urban economy but they form an indispensable source for the economic annals of rural Bengal".¹⁰ One difficulty at present is that the Collectorate records of erstwhile East Bengal are practically beyond our easy reach. However, the greatest difficulty faced by scholars is that most of these records are not properly catalogued and are kept in a haphazard manner. Proper facilities for research work are not also there in most of the district repositories making it extremely difficult to tap these records exhaustively.

F : PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS, REPORTS, SELECTIONS, ETC.

These materials are extremely helpful to the researchers at the initial stage of their work before they go into the archival records. These materials constitute primary sources and help fill in the gaps in the accounts available from records. No exhaus-

tive account of such materials is possible in the short compass of a paper ; but an idea may be formed from the following list :

Fort Williams - India House Correspondence (relevant volumes)

Bengal and Madras Papers edited by G. W. Forrest

Bengal Manuscript Records edited by W. W. Hunter

A Statistical Account of Bengal by W. W. Hunter

An Elementary Analysis of the Laws and Regulations enacted by the Governor-General-in-Council at Fort William edited by J. H. Harrington

Journals and Reports of Francis Buchanan. (Buchanan after serving the Company in various capacities, was entrusted by the Court of Directors to carry on a detailed statistical survey of Bengal. He finished the work in 1814 and his well-known Reports contain useful material for the early years of the nineteenth century.)

Report on the Inland Customs and Town Duties in the Bengal Presidency, 1834 by Charles Trevelyan. (This is an invaluable report and became very rare. However, the present writer has edited and published the Report in 1976.)

Observations upon the Transit and Town Duties of the Bengal Presidency, Calcutta, 1835. (This is also a rare volume. But in the manuscript form it may be found in the Proceedings of the Finance Department, Separate Revenue.)

Reports on the Administration of the Bengal Presidency
Bengal Commercial Annuals

Reports of the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce (Some annual and others bi-annual)

Financial Statements, Government of India

Reports on the Internal Trade of Bengal

Reports on the External Trade of Bengal

Reports on the Maritime Trade of Bengal

Reports on the River-borne traffic of the Lower Provinces of Bengal

Reports on the Trade carried by Rail and River in Bengal

*Annual Statements of the Sea-borne Trade and Navigation
of the Bengal Presidency*

G : PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS

Papers presented in the House of Lords and the House of Commons of the British Parliament in the form of reports, returns, etc. constitute a valuable supplementary source for the history of trade and commerce in Bengal. Parliamentary debates may often be profitably utilised along with the Papers to make a more fruitful study. The reports of the Parliamentary Committees on the affairs of the East India Company are particularly important. Before the Charter Acts were passed, such Committees made a deep probe into the activities of the East India Company. The Reports, Minutes of Evidences, and especially the statistical data given in the appendix of such Reports left behind enormous materials for the researchers. One great advantage of these materials is that the scholars get at hand sufficient ready-made and properly arranged data for use in their works. Secondly, these Papers often reveal the attitude of the authorities in England. Their reactions to various problems in Bengal may be analysed and cross-examined in the light of other available documents. Parliamentary Papers are almost half-digested materials so to say, collected at one place and objective in their approach. One can say that if reading of the relevant secondary works is the first step of a researcher, delving into the Parliamentary Papers leads him to the gateway of primary research efforts. Leaving aside the question of attitudes as reflected in such materials, it may be said that Parliamentary Papers are safe and honest materials for the reconstruction of the history of Trade and Commerce in Bengal in the nineteenth century.

**H : GAZETTES, GAZETTEERS, CENSUS REPORTS, JOURNALS
AND MAGAZINES, Etc.**

These are useful non-archival primary literary materials which often help scholars complete the story they want to present. The gazettes and gazetteers are particularly helpful. *Bengal District Gazetteers* (old series), and *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, both 'Indian Empire' and 'Provincial' series, are constant companions

so to say at the initial stage of the work. *Selections from Calcutta Gazetteers* can be relied upon, if one has, to save some time. The first comprehensive Census operation took place in 1881, and the Census reports (particularly the tables) are relevant for the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Contemporary Journals, Magazines, Newspapers, etc. are no less important as a source for the history of Bengal's trade and commerce. *Asiatic Annual Register*, *Asiatic Researches*, *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, *Calcutta Journal*, *Bengal Hurkaru*, *Bengal Spectator*, *Calcutta Courier*, *Friend of India*, etc. are only a few to mention. *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha* edited by Brajendranath Bandyopadhyay contains selections from contemporary Bengali newspapers like *Samachardarpan*, *Samachar Chandrika*, *Sambad Kaumudi*, which are useful for the economic history of Bengal during the early nineteenth century.

I : RECORDS OF OLD BUSINESS AND ZAMINDARI HOUSES

It is needless to emphasise the importance of the papers of the mercantile concerns (mostly European) in nineteenth-century Bengal. These materials will give us first-hand information about the actors in the drama of trade and commerce. The papers of the business concerns—proceedings, correspondence and account books are certainly necessary for the writing of business history. But unfortunately, most of such papers are not available to us. What is more deplorable is that records of business associations like Bengal Chamber of Commerce are not thrown open even for genuine research works. What are available to us are the fragmentary papers of some business houses. However, there is a complete series of annual or bi-annual reports of the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce which contain useful processed materials. It is, however, hoped that in course of time, with the growing sense of history, records of the mercantile bodies of the nineteenth century will all be available for research. So long as that is not done, one may look to the High Court records for some help. "The commercial case records contain many attested copies of papers of many old business houses in the form of exhibits, the originals of which have perhaps been destroyed".¹¹

The exact nature and contents of the prominent family papers in Bengal, with a few exceptions, are anybody's guess. It is well-known that many of the zamindar families took part in trading operations either directly or indirectly, within or outside their estates. Many of the zamindar families even today refuse access to their old records. But recently the ice is melting and the descendants of the old Raj-families have become history-minded. Either they are themselves attempting historical accounts of their families or they are permitting others to look into their records. In this connection mention may be made of 'Surul Papers' in the custody of Visva-Bharati. These are the old records of the erstwhile Sarkar family of Surul near Santiniketan, and they contain highly interesting materials even for trade and commerce of Birbhum. It must be said that in a general history of trade and commerce of Bengal during the last century, the old records of the zamindar families are of peripheral interest; but they cannot be ignored altogether.

A panoramic review of the sources of the history of trade and commerce in Bengal in the nineteenth century will lead us to conclude that there is no dearth of materials for the purpose of research. On the other hand, the scholar is faced with a vast array of diverse materials the proper marshalling of which at times becomes a difficult task. One real handicap in attempting a sophisticated quantification will be the absence of a reliable, connected price current in Bengal. This is particularly felt in the first half of the nineteenth century. At the end, one vital warning to the researchers: in any research in the history of trade and commerce the scholar has to remain on guard regarding the diversity of weights and measures. The values of the weights and measures were not uniform, and not the same for all types of transactions. If this is not kept in mind the scholar may land into peculiar difficulties and his study may lead to erroneous conclusions.

REFERENCES

- ¹ Charles Trevelyan, *Report on the Inland Customs and Town Duties of the Bengal Presidency*, p. 4.
- ² See S. Bhattacharya, *The East India Company and the Economy of Bengal*, p. 29.
- ³ Quoted in H. R. Ghoshal, *The Economic Transition in the Bengal Presidency*, p. 169.
- ⁴ Hugh Edward Egerton, *A Short History of British Colonial Policy*, p. 4.
- ⁵ R. C. Dutt, *The Economic History of India under Early British Rule*, Preface.
- ⁶ N. K. Sinha (edited), *The History of Bengal, 1757-1905*, p. 344.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 360.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 362.
- ⁹ N. K. Sinha, *The Economic History of Bengal*, Vol. I, p. 250.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 138.

ART AS A SOURCE OF THE HISTORY OF MODERN BENGAL

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I

I. Nature of the Source-Material

A STUDY of art as a source of history presupposes certain methodological problems. It has been denied by many art critics that art has anything to do with history. 'Art for Art's sake', a theory which became fashionable in the nineteenth century, still has faithful supporters. Opposed totally to this view are those who regard Art mainly as a result of particular production-relations.

The relationship between art and society cannot be ignored for art itself is a social phenomenon. The artist is a social being. His work serves as a link between him and other members of society (i.e., his patrons and audience); moreover, a work of art acts as a social force which by its emotional or ideological weight moves or inspires people. To comprehend the role played by art in society we must consider the conditions in which the work of art is produced, the social position of the artists, and the social determinants of taste.

In class-society art usually reflects the ideology of the ruling class, though often transcending the ideological limits of its time and yielding an insight into social realities

Styles of painting and architecture as well as themes can indicate a change in social history. Social facts lead to visual skills and habits and these become identifiable elements in the artist's style.

In the source-material under survey, emphasis has been placed

on different art-forms only as they gained significance in history. In order to do this I have left out 'folk art' in general. They correspond to the history of traditional crafts which deserve separate attention.

The source-material under survey is vast and varied. To do justice to even a fragmented section would require a separate volume. I have merely given a brief sketch of artistic movements which can be utilised to study the social attitudes and cultural changes in the history of Bengal from the eighteenth to the twentieth century.

II. *The Classification of the Source-Material*

The examples of visual arts under survey can be classified as follows :

(i) Painting, (ii) Architecture.

The source-material can be utilised to study certain periodic social changes in the history of Bengal.

(i) The period from 1700 to 1757 denotes declining court patronage. In painting, the themes at first reflect the ideology of the new independent provincial courts. It remains a continuation (in a subdued form) of Imperial Mughal painting. With the decline in the power of the Bengal Nawabs, there is a decline in patronage which results in the decay of traditional skills. In architecture, there is a sudden creative impulse. A new school of temple architecture develops due to local patronage. This can be classified as the Bengal School of temple architecture.

(ii) From 1757 is seen the impact of colonial culture.

(a) In architecture, both Murshidabad and Calcutta became centres of colonial architecture. This left its marks so vividly, that right up to the twentieth century the mansions of the rich in the cities and towns followed the colonial style.

(b) In sculpture the neo-classical style dominated but this did not create a school of sculpture in India.

(c) In painting, the arrival of amateur and professional artists from Europe started certain changes. Both painting and architecture however reflected the British colonial attitudes.

(d) In Indian painting new styles were introduced due to

changed patronage. This came to be termed the Company School of Painting. During this period traditional Indian art degenerated. This was superseded by new attempts at formal experiments with foreign techniques. The whole process tried unsuccessfully to adapt European techniques to Indian experience. This resulted in the decay of the traditional skills and the growth of a lifeless art.

(e) A definite reaction against the impact of colonial Western culture is to be seen in the Kalighat painting, an art form which had derived its basic inspiration from folk painting. The paintings depict a certain social satire directed against the effete products of the colonial rule, the Bengali 'Babu'.

(iii) The third phase begins in the early twentieth century. Here we notice an attempt at reviving the traditions of the past in an 'up-to-date garb'. This marks the beginning of the art of modern Bengal. On the one hand is seen the imposition of an institutional art drawn from the British academic model, backed by the policy of the British government to educate the 'natives'. On the other hand, in keeping with the national movement, there is the search for a national art by an alienated people whose art and culture had been constantly abused.

III. *A Survey of the Source-Material*

(i) (a) *Murshidabad Paintings*: The first phase of Mughal painting in Bengal begins with the decline of patronage at Delhi during the reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707). Migrant artists dispersed to the provincial courts in search of new patronage.¹

Taking advantage of Delhi's declining power, Murshid Quli and Alivardi Khan made Bengal virtually independent. Murshid Quli, Shujauddin and Alivardi Khan, these three Nawabs gave Bengal a long period of peace and orderly administration and promoted its trade and industry. This naturally was an opportunity for the arts to flourish. The court became a centre of patronage. The paintings in turn reflected the life of the court: 'Murshid Quli Khan holding court' (Clive Album, Victoria and Albert Museum) or 'Alivardi Khan in a hunting scene at Rajmahal' (c. 1750, Victoria and Albert Museum, London). Another

interesting painting shows Alivardi with his nephew and grandsons Saukat Jung and young Sirajuddaulah (Victoria and Albert Museum, London). Apart from the court scenes, paintings were also made of *Ragamalas* and of women. These were to be found in smaller numbers. Alivardi was known to have held conservative views about women and entertainment. The early Murshidabad paintings resembled later Mughal painting both in style and technique. Specially in their formality and sombre colouring the paintings owed a great deal to the style current at the end of Aurangzeb's reign.

During the period of Mir Jafar, artists from Lucknow like Puran Nath, Hunhar and Dipchand arrived bringing with them brighter colours. The interest now turned to portraits mainly of the Nawab and his officers. A number of Europeans are also depicted in some paintings now reserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. The first paintings executed for the British at Murshidabad were portrait miniatures in Mughal style. In the Victoria and Albert Museum there is a portrait probably of William Fullerton. Fullerton was a surgeon in Bengal and Bihar (c. 1744—c. 1766). He was greatly interested in Indian painting. He made a collection of Indian miniatures. The major contributor in the collection was a Murshidabad artist, Dipchand.

The most important collection of Murshidabad paintings are to be found in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the India Office Library, London. The Indian Museum and the Victoria Memorial, Calcutta have a few which are yet to be identified.

(b) *Architecture*: Temple building was a very important part of social activity in the traditional Indian society. The majority of the temples which are strewn around the countryside of Bengal were built between the second half of the fifteenth and the latter half of the eighteenth century. Nearly fifty percent of the temples are definitely dated by the inscriptions affixed to the front facade just below the roof. A tremendous boost to the building of temples seems to have occurred during the second half of the eighteenth century and this continued till about the end of the nineteenth century.²

Special areas which deserve mention are the north-eastern part

of Midnapore district, the contiguous tracts covered by the south-eastern part of Hooghly district, the eastern part of the Bankura district, the south and central parts of Burdwan district.

Usually built of brick (with the exception of a few laterite temples at Bishnupur, Bankura) the temples are generally of modest proportions. The architectural inspirations were derived from various sources. The 'Ratnas', 'Chalas' and 'Dalans' were mainly inspired by the huts and residential houses. Both Muslim architecture as well as the early north Indian 'Sikhara' temples influenced the terracotta structures.

A study of the thematic and architectural changes in the history of temple-building in Bengal points, as its most important aspect, to the social determinants of taste and the question of social mobility of the patrons. New economic opportunities and changes in occupation afforded a large section of the 'Nabasakh', 'Ajalchal' intermediaries and 'Antyaja' castes to acquire prosperity. They became the new patrons in the creation of temples as well as the upper caste landlords. The East India Company's revenue reforms which culminated in the Permanent Settlement of 1793 afforded them the opportunities to become zamindars. Endowments made for the erection of temples became an aspect of their new social role.

It is interesting to notice the changes in themes and the superstructures of the temples due to the changes in the preference of the various groups of patrons, specially of the lower castes, in their attempts to acquire 'Brahmanization'.

A very important point in the relation between formal artistic achievements and social development is to be noticed in the history of temple-building extending for over four hundred years. According to Hitesranjan Sanyal : 'It is a period of stagnation followed by degenerate practices'.³ By this he means that the technical problems of construction continued to remain.

In contrast to Murshidabad paintings, the tremendous impulse towards patronage of an architectural form whose main basis of inspiration came from folk and regional models indicates the continuation of a creative force. This is particularly important

at a time when regional and folk crafts were being threatened by lack of patronage.

II

The Colonial Impact: During the eighteenth century, Bengal occupied a central place among British interests in Asia. In the later eighteenth century British political power grew to the point where Bengal became the first substantial area under British control. The resources of Bengal were used to increase the territorial possessions of the British in other parts of India. This increasing British involvement left a great impact on art, specially painting and architecture.

With the East India Company emerging as the virtual ruler of Bengal, Company servants considered themselves the aristocrats of the European community.⁴ They also tried to ensure that the most lucrative opportunities for personal enrichment were confined to them. Along with this were the private British individuals who had been given the right of private trade by the East India Company. Quite a large number of European travellers came to India in the wake of the East India Company's servants. Some of them were artists. Everyone came with the hope of amassing a quick fortune. This new community of Europeans in India became the patrons of a new art. They rejected the traditional Indian art and clung to the norms of that European art which was fashionable during this period. This they considered as their 'own art' and the rules of this art were imposed upon Indian artists who sought their patronage.

The Europeans in India maintained a standard of living beyond the reach of an average European in his own country. In 1730 the Directors complained about an extravagant way of living particularly in equipage and show.⁵ This was the life which the British wanted to record and the paintings acted as the only means in a pre-photographic age. Architecture, however, was to serve another purpose. It was utilised to erect that European way of life which the Company's servants hoped to achieve.

(a) *Architecture:* Before 1784 the British lived in tiny

enclaves in great cities and commercial centres of Mughal Bengal. It was mainly in Calcutta that their presence was really felt. A massive rebuilding and expansion occurred in Calcutta after 1757. The buildings in the European quarters can be divided into three groups. Firstly, there were the public buildings like the fort, Governor's palace, the post offices, etc. The second group consisted of churches, and the third of the houses of private individuals, mainly Europeans and rich Indians.

The architectural style followed in these various buildings during the eighteenth century and up to the middle of the nineteenth century showed a clear neo-classical style that was fashionable in Europe.⁶ It was commented upon by travellers like Bishop Heber in 1825 who found in the European houses of Calcutta, an extreme similarity with those in Russia. Daniell's 'Views of Calcutta' (1786-88) and Hodges's 'Travels in India' (1783) illustrated the pattern on which European architecture in India developed.

Brick and lime were utilised to create a surface facade resembling marble. Even now the ruins of old buildings show the remains of Grecian pillars and ornaments with high carved pediments.

It was argued by the early architects that Indian climate would seem to be far more congenial to antique and neo-classical architecture. Here porticos and colonnades acted as sun-breakers and the sunlight and the clear sky made a perfect setting for the white buildings.

Criticism was made by others like Hodges who published a dissertation on architectural prototypes. The book was a result of tour with Warren Hastings through Bengal and up to the northern provinces of India. According to him different laws should operate for oriental architecture and European architecture. The climate and living conditions in India were also not suitable for neo-classical architecture.

The residential houses of more modest proportions were built in a style which is a fusion of the European and the Indian. It came to be known as *bangla*, i.e., something originating in Bengal.

A new and foreign standard in architecture was imposed which came to be termed 'colonial architecture'. This owed its

origin to the general nostalgic feeling of the colonists. 'When immigration to a foreign country takes place, their prototype (architectural) will follow the colonist.'⁷

Compared to other European societies overseas, the British community in Bengal did not strike any roots. They regarded their residence as purely temporary. The palaces and churches which they left behind had a longer life. This created an architectural pattern which the Indian nationalists in art had to combat as more and more houses and palaces of the rich Indians (like the *Hazarduary* at Murshidabad) adopted this neo-classical style.

(b) *Colonial Sculpture* : Calcutta streets and public buildings were decorated with examples of sculpture. Most of these are now collected in the Victoria Memorial, Calcutta. The sculptures can be classified into three groups. The busts and heads are mainly portraits. Besides these there are full length portrait statues. Some of these are in full court-dress like those of Queen Victoria and Marquess of Hastings. These represent the official dignitaries. Others represent the figures in Roman dress as in the statues of Warren Hastings by Richard Westmacott and Marquess Cornwallis by John Bacon Junior. These are examples of neo-classical sculpture which were popular in Europe.

Interesting sculptured friezes decorate the pedestals of statues. The examples in front of the Victoria Memorial and the pedestal of William Bentinck's statue are good examples of the prevailing neo-classical style. Portraits and friezes set a fashion which was imitated by Indians in the creation of their own sculpture. This left no lasting impression and was far removed from the mainstream of the nation's art. The houses of the rich Indians came to be decorated with imitations of cheap Italian statuary representing female figures indicative of the debased tastes due to the impact of the colonial culture.

III

Paintings of the Europeans in India : By the end of the eighteenth century the East India Company recruited men to whom refinement was an important virtue. Many of them

shared the fashionable interest of the exotic and the picturesque. Since the appointments often tended to follow in the same family, some of them like Captain Bellow (*Memoirs of a Griffin*, London, 1848) came to India filled with great expectations. They wanted to record all that they saw. Others like Mrs. Fay stepped off the boat at Madras in 1780 and noted 'Asiatic splendour combined with European taste exhibited around you in every side' (Eliza Fay, *Original letters from India*, Calcutta, 1817). The source-material in drawings and paintings of British life in Bengal should be grouped into two broad sections. On the one hand there were the amateur artists whose main interest was to record their new experiences. They drew and sketched with little thought of monetary gain or commercial advantage. Most of these survive as travel accounts, diaries and letters, quite often illustrated. The largest amount of this material is to be found in the collection of the India Office Library, London, about some 4,620 in number, illustrating the work of amateur artists in a private capacity. The majority of these drawings and in some cases sketch-books and scrap albums were presents to the library.⁶

The Victoria Memorial (Calcutta) has a large collection of water-colours and some travel accounts. The library houses quite a few personal journals and memoirs as well.

The second group of artists were men who earned their living by drawing, paintings and engraving. Their aims and achievements were harnessed to commercial ends.

The works of the amateurs can be further grouped into two. The men and women who were illustrating their letters, journals and diaries. To this group belong those who had taken up the cult of the picturesque. Like the modern tourists with their cameras the British in eighteenth-century India were never without their sketch-books. Their works were reduced to a particular formula. The animals must have shaggy forms, the people must be rugged and buildings needed a pleasing decay. It is known that Emily Eden seized upon almost any ruins or mouldering building to illustrate her diary. Mention must be made in this connection of Emma Robert's 'East Indian Voyager', Elisha Trapaud's 'Twenty Views of India' (1788), Emily Eden's 'Up the

'Country' and Mrs. Belnos's and Emily Eden's water-colour drawings.

To the second group of amateurs belonged the Company's servants whose artistic skills were increased due to training in the Military Academy of Art at Woolwich or private coaching. They were utilised to make surveys, accompany embassies and record archaeological buildings of interest. Slowly, as the need increased, even professional artists were brought in to help maintain the records.

Curiosity about India kept increasing as the wealth kept pouring into the coffers of the East India Company. Now came a number of professional artists who hoped to publish their impressions of the New Land and make a quick fortune. Their work has been described by the Daniells as the 'guiltless spoilation' of the natural wealth of India to increase the knowledge of the Europeans.

The first important artist to arrive in India was William Hodges. His *Select Views in India* (1786) became very popular. The next important works were by Thomas and William Daniell : *The Twelve Views of Calcutta* (1786-88), *Oriental Scenery* (6 vols., 1795-1808), *A Picturesque Voyage in India* (1810), and with the help of Caunter, *The Oriental Annual*.

Henry Salt was trained by Joseph Farrington and accompanied Lord Valentia in 1802. Colesworthy Grant's *Anglo-Indian Domestic Sketch* (1848-1849) and *Rural life in Bengal* (1859) are very interesting accounts of the time. Other important artists to visit India were George Chinnery (1802-1807) and Edward Lear (second half of the nineteenth century). Apart from these artists a large number of portrait painters arrived in India. They did not limit themselves to landscapes and local life. Mention must be made of John Zoffany (1733-1810). A German by birth he settled in England and came to India in 1783. Robert Home (1752-1834) lived long in India. A large number of his paintings are scattered all over India. The Asiatic Society in Calcutta houses a good collection.

A lively interest taken in the real life around them are to be found in the works of Solvyns and Atkinson. Atkinson's *Curry*

and Rice, The Campaign in India and *Indian Spices for English Table* are important as they are different from the usual British accounts.

Francois Balthazar was a Belgian (1760-1824). His most memorable work is an album of 250 coloured drawings of the customs, manners and costumes of the people of Bengal. This was published on 1st January, 1799 in Calcutta.

It must be pointed out that the number of known, recorded and unrecorded European artists are numerous and it is impossible to give a list of their names. Their works lie in private collections, in the Asiatic Society and the Victoria Memorial, Calcutta. The India Office Library, London, has the largest collection.

The most important aspects of these drawings lie in the attempt to reflect a new experience : that of the strange and exotic eastern colony. The artists' own complex attitude towards life in India is also revealed. Their varied experiences depicted in paintings convey to us vividly those aspects of life in eighteenth-century India which are neglected by the other written records. A necessary adjunct to these are the Company Paintings of the period.

Indian Paintings for the British : The entire history of Company Paintings is of great interest in showing the attempts of the Indian artist to adapt his traditional skills and outlook to western taste, techniques, media and choice of subjects.

IV

The patronage at the courts of provincial Nawabs were slowly coming to an end, and the British acquired political control over larger territories in India. This created a group of migrant artists trained in the traditional skills who came to Murshidabad and Calcutta seeking the patronage of the British.

They came to be employed in various capacities. Some were employed by the East India Company as draftsmen to engineering officers. They were also employed in survey works. Indian artists were also recruited to assist engravers like Charles D'Oyly and the Daniells. Private individuals like Emily Eden made the

Indians copy their drawings. The Indian artist was quick to notice the changed style. The European methods of perspective and light had been learnt partially by the Indian artists in the Mughal period but now the lessons of European art were more strictly applied. Two particular schools of Company paintings developed in Bengal—the Murshidabad and the Calcutta School.⁹

(a) *Murshidabad*: The first paintings executed for the British were portrait miniatures in Mughal style, whole sets comprised of Murshidabad and Mughal rulers. The India Office Library has an interesting collection (No. 39).

Simultaneously with portraits, sets of pictures were made depicting the various occupations and costumes of the local people. Particular emphasis was placed on those who worked as servants for the British or who had everyday relations with them: the milkman, the washerman, etc.

The style of the Indian artists began to change. Shadows were added and elongated figures in long 'jamas' with folds indicated at the bottom of the skirt with a jagged line began to appear; sepia wash in varying shades of grey and brown and heavy black border make the paintings very sombre.

Besides paintings in water-colour on paper, paintings for the British on small rectangles of mica, also developed during the last twenty years of the eighteenth century.¹⁰

With the decline of Murshidabad most of the artists migrated to Calcutta. A new school of Company paintings developed. Some of them found private patronage as with Sir Elijah Impey and Nathaniel Middleton to draw plants and birds. Some became specialists in natural history drawings. The artists in Calcutta were more aware of British tastes. From the 1790's the Calcutta artists showed a tendency to copy European prints and engravings depicting the Indians. It is their ability to imitate in detail the British paintings and drawings that enabled them to gain British patronage. Their own artistic skills were dismissed by the British as of no artistic merit. In the second half of the nineteenth century, with the coming of the camera, Company painting slowly came to an end.

Apart from the fact that the 'Company Paintings' of Bengal acted as visual records and natural supplements to the other records on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century India, its main importance lies in being the last original contribution by Indian traditional artists.¹¹

(b) *Kalighat Painting, a protest*: Calcutta saw the growth of another form of painting quite different in style and spirit from the existing Company paintings.

As the patronage declined even in the village, a group of folk artists (*Potuas*) came mainly from the Midnapore area and settled in Calcutta. They had hoped for patronage from the local Bengali rich and the Europeans. The new aristocracy of Calcutta whether British or Indian refused them patronage. The Kalighat painters who had settled themselves round the temple of 'Kali' found a new clientele—the ordinary pilgrim.

Stylistically, Kalighat painting can be divided into three phases. Beginning about 1830 there is a mixed style: modelling was combined with vigorous lines. Whether this was due to European artistic influence is still debatable. From the middle of the eighteenth century the lines became finer and the colour very vivid. After 1870, due to competitions with German oleographs and cheap lithographs, Kalighat painting started to decline. Often they became just line drawings, bold, vivacious but less expensive. The changed economy and the altered taste of the late nineteenth century (due to the Industrial Revolution) forced the Kalighat painters to take up other occupations.¹²

The most important aspect of Kalighat paintings lies in its themes. Gods and goddesses, allegorical animals, contemporary events like the 'Elokesi scandal' and most important of all a satire against the life of the 'Bengali Babu' found expression in Kalighat painting. This Babu is also satirised by Kaliprasanna Sinha in *Hutum Panchar Naksha* and Bhabani Charan Bandyopadhyay in *Kalikata Kamalulaya*.

The satire becomes a new form of protest. Both stylistically (by adhering to a folk form) and thematically Kalighat painting points to the social realities of the period. For the average Bengali artist traditional values in art, religion and society were

decaying. This is clearly reflected in the atmosphere of Calcutta, which is depicted as 'Ghor Kali' (the last age of sin). The Kalighat artists unlike the Company painters did not conform to colonial demands; they protested. Unfortunately they could not survive. Their work has become collectors' items in the R. P. Gupta and Birla private collections, and some are to be found in the Asutosh Museum (Calcutta).

The artistic movements in painting and architecture of the mid-eighteenth-nineteenth century in Bengal reveal three interesting issues which should be studied carefully.

The first is the change in the social relationship of the patron and the artist. There is a general decay in the patronage of the arts (with the exception of the Bengal temples). This results in the death of the traditional skills. Analogous to the condition of rural handicrafts, traditional Indian art falls a victim to the changed tastes dominated by the Industrial Revolution. The British attitude is further shaped by current art-fashions in Europe which are totally opposed to Indian art. The British regarded Indian art as 'not naturalistic', with 'no sense of perspective' and therefore not acceptable. Secondly, the change in the social position of the artist becomes a very important issue. From a 'Mughal noble' and a respected 'artisan' he is reduced to the position of a migrant labourer. He moves from place to place hoping for patronage. The history of the migrant Indian artist in the eighteenth-nineteenth century makes an interesting study of changing social attitudes.

The third is the attitude of the British ruling class during this period. They are convinced of the superiority of their own culture over every other nation, specially India. In spite of the attempts by British orientalists like William Jones (whose essay on the gods of Greece, Italy and India in 1784, was regarded very highly by contemporaries), the British government continued in their policy of condemning Indian art. They also persisted in reflecting an illusion of 'splendour' in their own art. This idea became so rigid that an Indian artist was forced to copy the pictures of the Indians from a British engraving. He was not allowed to look at the street and paint. This complete aver-

Apart from the fact that the 'Company Paintings' of Bengal acted as visual records and natural supplements to the other records on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century India, its main importance lies in being the last original contribution by Indian traditional artists.¹¹

(b) *Kalighat Painting, a protest*: Calcutta saw the growth of another form of painting quite different in style and spirit from the existing Company paintings.

As the patronage declined even in the village, a group of folk artists (*Potuas*) came mainly from the Midnapore area and settled in Calcutta. They had hoped for patronage from the local Bengali rich and the Europeans. The new aristocracy of Calcutta whether British or Indian refused them patronage. The Kalighat painters who had settled themselves round the temple of 'Kali' found a new clientele—the ordinary pilgrim.

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sion to reality marks the attitude of the British government specially in the policies of artistic and cultural education in India.

In Search of a National Art: Two conflicting experiences mark the field of art in eighteenth-nineteenth-century India. The British attitude was characterised by Mill who argued that the arts in India were still in a primitive state, that no tradition of art existed in India. Opposed to this was the Indian artist who was being trained in European techniques but who failed to accept this completely as it did not fit into his traditional artistic scheme. A solution was offered by Macaulay who offered Western education to create a new species of Indians—the 'coloured' British.

British attention was turned to Indian arts by a new movement for the reformation of industrial designs in England. This coincided with the growing awareness of the decorative arts of India. The leading figures in the movement were the designers—Owen Jones, Matthew Digby Wyatt, Gottfried Semper, Richard Redgrave and Henry Cole. These designers looked to Indian ornamental designs to provide inspiration and to infuse a new life into moribund industrial arts in Britain. Significantly they did not show much interest in Indian sculpture and painting.¹³

One of the ways suggested to the British government by a Parliamentary Committee which had been set up to assess the aesthetic merits of English industrial products was to provide education for the artisans. Two shades of opinion existed on the question of the type of art education to be imparted in Britain—whether there were to be academies to provide a broad-based cultural education or whether there were to be workshops to train artisans for the industry.¹⁴ The debate was continued also for India. A central school for industrial workers was founded at Somerset House in 1837. In 1854 in Bengal was founded the 'Industrial Art Society'. This Society ran a school of Industrial art which was later converted into the Government School of Art, Calcutta, during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Northbrook, who added an art gallery to it. The whole aim of the British now centred on creating a class of educated Indians whose tastes would be so modulated that they would be willing to buy British industrial

goods and in turn bring out small objects of art, which would find a ready market in Europe.

In the great exhibition of 1851 in London, Indian art objects figured prominently. Foreign visitors to the exhibition spoke highly of the Indian section. The economist Blanqui commented that the products of British India merit the attention of the technologists as well as philosophers and economists. The government was now forced to concede to Indian artisans, even if they did not regard them as artists.¹⁵

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The spirit of Macaulay's Minutes (1835) hung over all aspects of educational reforms in India even till the twentieth century. There was criticism as well as approval from the Indians.¹⁶ In the early twentieth century a new section of the English-educated elite had been created. Some of them took private art lessons from the numerous European artists who had started coming to India in the wake of the East India Company. Their tastes were formed by the current art trends in Britain. According to Goetz this art 'was merely a rehash of Graeco-Roman, Renaissance and medieval reminiscences in improved techniques, but of weakened sensitiveness, however they were convinced of its superiority over all the other barbarian creations of mankind'.¹⁷ A section of Indians accepted this and they were the products of the new art schools in India. At first the aim of the art schools was to turn out artisans. A change was brought about by H. N. Locke who joined the art school in 1864, when a section of fine arts was added to the already existing section of industrial arts. Oil painting, water-colour drawing, cast drawing and life-study were introduced. After a while some of the students of the art school like Annada Charan Bagchi set up private studios. Their main works were lithographs and engravings.¹⁸

One of the major exponents of the new art education in India was the well-known artist Ravi Varma from Travancore. His work became immensely popular even in Bengal. He painted

Indian mythologies in a westernised technique. Cheap prints of his work filled every home in Bengal.

This was the condition of artistic production in Bengal when a new movement in art began. The two men who are mainly considered responsible for this are E. B. Havell and Abanindranath Tagore.

An important social factor in the new art scene in India was the changed position of the artist. While the British Government was interested only in craftsmen, the new artist in Bengal wanted to be treated as an 'individual talent'. They were also members of the new English-educated gentry. Abanindranath Tagore and his brothers as members of the rich Tagore family are the examples of this new group of artists. The problem that faced Abanindranath and the new artist in Bengal, was the denial by the British rulers of any great artistic tradition in India. Indian art was declared to be dead. The dialogue between Cecil Burns, Principal of the Government Art College in Bombay and E. B. Havell illustrates the official attitude of the government regarding the revival of art in India.¹⁹ Both Abanindranath and Havell, like the Orientalists, sought for examples of Indian art in archaeology and the 'Silpasastras'.²⁰ Abanindranath also explored Mughal and Rajasthani painting of the seventeenth century. The attempt was to turn the attention of the educated Indians towards a new aesthetics. Indian taste had become corrupted; a new recognition of an older and greater art (i.e., the sculptures of the Gupta period and the paintings of Ajanta and Bagh) was necessary. Coomaraswamy, Cousins, Sister Nivedita and Rothenstein joined the movement for a new art, which gathered great momentum. In 1907 was established the Indian Society of Oriental Art. Later the Society started running a school. The whole aim was to provide an alternative to the official government methods of art instruction.

Nationalism, mainly 'Swadeshi', provided the major basis of inspiration in the artistic world of early twentieth-century Bengal. Coomaraswamy's *Art and Swadeshi* became the manifesto of the new movement.

This movement for a new aesthetics in India coincided with

the attitude of a certain section of Victorians in England who renounced the industrial products of their age as ugly and advocated a return to past art. But all this did not solve the problems of the working artist. Abanindranath, writing on 'Rabindranath and Modern Indian Art',²¹ relates how the artist had come to a dead end in technique when he had been requested by Rabindranath to illustrate 'Balak' and 'Sadhana'. He was inspired out of the stupor by an album of paintings in the provincial Mughal style which fell into his hands at this time. Rabindranath published this album in 'Sadhana'.

Abanindranath took a full year to complete his Krishna-Leela series—his earliest attempt at a return to the medium of medieval Indian miniatures. It was after this that he met Havell who came to Calcutta to become the principal of the Government Art College.

At Havell's request Abanindranath joined the Art College in 1905. His greatest contribution lies in building up a school of art with students like Nandalal, Benodebehari, Kshitin Majumdar and others. This paved the way for another great artist who turned to Bengali folk art for inspiration—Jamini Roy.

Tradition, as is understood by the modern artist, is not confined within the limits of a particular period of national history. His tradition embraces the world heritage of art. Abanindranath, Gaganendranath and Rabindranath understood this. Abanindranath tried to explore Japanese art, Gaganendranath experimented with 'cubism' and Rabindranath can be considered our first 'expressionist' painter.²²

Most of their works, apart from those scattered in private collections are to be found in the Visva-Bharati and Rabindra Bharati University collections. Mukul Dey and Benodebehari attempted to draw up a chronology of Abanindranath's works.²³ The same should be done for Gaganendranath and Rabindranath.

The contribution of the modern Bengali artists in building up a new movement in aesthetics is undeniably significant. The Renaissance analogy to the intellectual movements of nineteenth-century Bengal is still being debated by historians. It has left out any study of art. If this movement can be stretched to the

twentieth century, the writings and paintings of the 'Bengal School' can provide valuable material.

As we near the contemporary period, the problem of surveying art as source-material becomes complex. It is the writings of Abanindranath, Havell, Coomaraswamy and Rabindranath on art that complete our study. The paintings themselves are only fragmented evidence.

The secondary material that has been utilised to study the different art movements as sources of the history of Bengal from the eighteenth to the twentieth century shows that these are mainly art catalogues or histories of art. Art has been rarely utilised (with the exception of H. Sanyal's work) to reconstruct history. Clearly a new approach to history-writing is necessary.

The general intellectual movements, questions of social mobility, attempts to study ruling-class attitudes, can be fruitfully studied by utilising art as source-material. Our attention has been monopolised by the archives too long. It is time we turn to museums and art collections.

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4 • Manipur

UNEXPLORED SOURCES FOR THE HISTORY OF MANIPUR

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MANIPUR is a picturesque hill-girt State in the extreme north-eastern corner of India. Nagaland forms its northern boundary ; Assam district of North Cachar Hill and Cachar lie on its west and north-west ; it is bounded on the south-west by the State of Mizoram and its boundary line touches Burma on its north-east, east and south. This tract of territory is located between N 23.50° and N 25.41° latitudes and E 93.2° and E 94.47° longitudes. The area of the State of Manipur is about 8,628 square miles.

Manipur is well-known for its rich cultural heritage. She has made great contributions towards Indian culture through her Vaishnavite cult, her music and dance, her arts and crafts and her literature. In the Epics and Puranas the land is known as Manipur. The Assamese people call it as Magalu or Mekhali ; the Shans know them as Ka-Se and the Burmese Ka-The.

The sources for the history of Manipur have not yet been properly explored. There are customs, legends, literatures, epigraphs, monuments and so on. These are again sub-divided into various categories like contemporary and post-contemporary, indigenous and foreign, records and finds, original and supplementary. The treatment of these disconnected datas in order to construct a genuine and scientific history is a matter of tremendous difficulty and needs careful handling. Here an attempt has been made to deal with only those sources which are primary in nature, scope and value and are still lying uninvestigated.

Archaeological sources

The excavation at Sangaithen, a fort and capital town of Manipur has revealed that Manipur offers a fertile field for archaeological researches. The remains of potteries and other objects found there lead us to believe that a neolithic civilisation flourished there at some remote age in the past. Similar experimental digging at Kameng, now a village 9 miles distant from Imphal by the side of Dimapur-Imphal Road, resulted in the collection of potteries, terra cotta plates and cups. These are now preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.¹

There were also excavations at Tangkhul, Ukhrul and Thoubal areas. A good number of neolithic celts have been collected from these places. Stone articles, bone tools and faunal remains were discovered from a number of limestone waves at Khankhul Khullen. Phunan Hill finds are mainly potteries. Fragments of potteries were also recovered from the old palace site at Awang Potsangbam. The relics belonging to the post-stone age have also been unearthed from the valley areas. A stone image of Buddha and a musical instrument have also been acquired. These studies reveal that the civilisation of Manipur can be traced from the palaeolithic age and since then the inhabitants of Manipur maintained cultural intercourse with China and many other countries of south-east Asia.²

Epigraphas : Rock inscriptions

The Nagarjuni Konda Rock Inscription (Andhra) of the second century A.D. mentions the existence of Buddhism in the Chin Hills, bordering Manipur. Tablets with Devnagari script of the early Christian era have also been dug up at the sites of Tagaung, Pagan, and Prome in Burma.³ These throw valuable light on the early history of Manipur.

The report on the archaeological finds of Manipur includes several stone inscriptions found in the hills near the valley. The stone tablets of Khagemba or Khagendrajit (1597-1652) are helpful for the study of contemporary history. King Charairongba's (1698-1709) stone inscription found at the compound of Konthonjam Lairemema, dated 1698 A.D., throws light on the administrative system of the time.⁴ An inscribed memorial

stone-slab with dragon insignia and inscription in Manipuri, dated 1754 S.E., established by King Gambhir Singh at Kohima is of cultural significance.

Epigraphs : Copperplates

The copperplates are issued mainly in connection with donation of lands. But they supply information about political life, economic condition and religious beliefs. The report on the archaeological studies in Manipur reveals that a good number of copperplates are available for studies. A copperplate dated 721 S.E. (799 A.D.) of King Khongtekcha (765-99) written in archaic Manipuri script refers to the existence of 363 gods. It starts with salutation to God 'Hari' and inculcates worship of Siva, Durga, Ganesh and Visvakarma for worldly gains. 13 cannons were recovered from the Imphal river near the old palace site of Awang Potsangbam. Some of them contain inscriptions. One of them is dated 1670 A.D. and bears the name of King Udayaditya Singh of Assam. Similar another of bell-metal is dated 1807 A.D.⁵

In the temple of Sri Sri Govindaji at Imphal there are two huge copper bells bearing inscriptions. One of them records 'Om Sakabda 1797 Chandrabda 1087 mahi 2 Chaitra Masa Sri Panchayukta Manipuresvara Gambhir Simha Maharajaki anugata oina Sri Panchayukta Manipuresvara Chandra Kirti Simha Maharaja nakatte Om Srimad Radha Govindaji Tamon 16 nahaipasarik 1'.⁶

Numismatic sources

Several varieties of coins issued by the different rulers of Manipur have been discovered. Four rectangular bronze coins were found. All of them bear Sanskrit legend in Devnagari script : 'Chaitra Sudhi Tarasha Vada 2 Samvada 164' (Sunday, the second day of the bright half of the month of Chaitra of the year 164 Samvat, i.e., 107 A.D.). This can be claimed as the coin of Pakhangba (33-154 A.D.). The discovery of these coins indicates that Manipur had trade activities with the neighbouring countries even in such an early period. Moiramba or Sthirabhadra (1278-1302) struck a kind of small and round

coins. Ryamba or Chintamani (1367-1408) also struck coins.⁷

We learn from Darrangrajvamsavali that in 1562 A.D. the king of Manipur submitted to the Koch King Nara Narayan and agreed to pay an annual tribute of 300 gold coins and 20,000 silver coins.⁸

King Khagemba or Khagendrajit (1597-1652) issued larger size bell-metal coins. The coins issued by Paikromba or Paikendra (1666-98) was of the oblong shape. King Charairongba also struck coins.⁹

The gold and silver coins of the Manipur rulers from Gharib Newaz or Gopal Singh (1709-48) to Churachandra Singh (1891-1941) are available for investigation.¹⁰

Materials from geographical researches

From the scholars in the field of geographical research we get a good deal of information as regard location of Manipur in ancient times. Gerini locates a region named Tugma mentioned in the Geography of Ptolemy (second century B.C.) in Cachar or Manipur. Similarly he also compares Mareura of the Ptolemy's Geography with Manipur.¹¹

In the geography of ancient India the location of the land of Manipur has been shown beyond Cachar in the east.¹² There is also reference to the land of the Kukis in Assam and Manipur.¹³ Manipur is also referred to in the geography of the Ved'ic India.¹⁴

Chinese sources

On the authority of the Chinese records of the second century B.C., Pelliot states that there was a track between Manipur and China from which some trade trickled through China to India and vice versa. In the second century B.C. when the Chinese ambassador Chang-Kien reached Bactria, he was surprised to see that bamboos imported from China. In reality, the bamboos from Yunnan reached mid-India through Manipur and from there these were transported to Bactria through the Grand Route.¹⁵ The Chinese records of the second century A.D. —as stated by Pelliot mention the existence of Brahminical religion in Manipur.¹⁶

Classical sources

The Greek writers inform that it was through the upper Burma and Manipur routes that the Chinese silk came to Bharu Kaccha (Barygaza), which later on was imported in the emporiums of Seleucia and Alexandria.¹⁷

Burmese sources

According to the Burmese Royal chronicle Maharajavamsa, Dhajaraja, a king of the Sakya race, settled at Manipur, about 550 B.C. and later on conquered old or upper Pagan (Burma).¹⁸ On the basis of certain local Burmese sources, Harvey in his *History of Burma* states : 'Upper Burma lay inaccessible, true ; it is nearer to China which from the second century B.C. used routes through—two were along the Irrawady and Salwin Rivers, the third down the Chindwin River and through Manipur took caravans a three months journey to Afghanistan where the silk of China were exchanged for the gold of Europe.'¹⁹

On the basis of Burmese traditions, ancient city-names and available historical remains, Sir Aurther Phayre in his *History of Burma* mentions that there was early communication between Gangetic India and Taangaung (Upper Burma). This was carried on through eastern Bengal and Manipur.²⁰ Through this route the Indians came and established their political power in upper Burma and the mountainous regions of the upper valleys of Irrawady, the Salween, the Mekong and the Red River as far as Yunnan.²¹

Shan chronicles

We learn from Captain S. F. Hannay that in 1835 A.D. when he made a journey from the capital of Ava to the Amber Mines of Hukong Valley, he saw many people from Manipur working there as miners and boatmen.²² We also get a good deal of information from the Shan chronicles. It is mentioned in one of the Shan chronicles available to Captain R. B. Pemberton that in 777 A.D. the Pong King Margnow died, leaving two sons, called Sookampha and Samlongpha, of whom the eldest Sookampha succeeded to the throne.

Samlongpha was despatched by Sookampha at the head of

a powerful force, to subdue first the principality of Bhama in the east. Next he conquered western country of the Basa (Banga) King, evidently Cachar. Next he conquered Tripura. From Tripura, he marched across the hills, and descended into the Manipur valley near Moirang, on the western bank of the Logtak lake.²³ According to Ney Elias these events took place in the early part of the thirteenth century A.D.²⁴

The same chronicles also record that in 1474 A.D. during the reign of Pong King Soohoongkhum, an embassy headed by a Shan nobleman called Chowlanghiee was sent to the Manipur king Kyamba or Chintamani (1467-1508) requesting a daughter in marriage, which was agreed upon. Previous to this the Pong king Soohoongkhum had promised one of his daughters to the dependent chieftain of Khumbat. She was on her way when she changed her mind, and with her father's consent, married another. Considering himself insulted, the Khumbat chief vowed revenge, and found in 1475 A.D. an opportunity of gratifying it by carrying off the Manipuri bride of the Pong king, while she was being escorted to Mogaung by the Pong ambassadors. This act brought upon him the united forces of Pong and Manipur. After the reduction of Khumbat, Pong king accompanied the Meithei king to Manipur, and his ancestor Samlongpha had caused alterations in the manner of dressing, he caused a change in the style of building houses.²⁵

Similarly the Shan chronicles also record many events that happened subsequently at Manipur.

Local myths and legends

There are many myths and legends among the people of Manipur. These are described in a series of tales or narratives in Manipuri language. Legends of Arjuna's sojourn in Manipur are associated with them. This is the synchronisation of the Brahminical Purana stories with the Meithei Purana. It has been effected thus : From Brahma was born Marichi, and then Kasyapa, Surya, Savarna, Chitraketu, Chitradhvaja, Chitrabija, Chitrasarva, Chitraraja and Chitrabhanu were born successively. Chitrangada, the daughter of Chitrabhanu was married to Arjuna and their son was Vabhruvahana. After Vabhruvahana there

were 13 kings like Supravahu, Kalapacchandra, Sakti, etc. and the last one was named as Yavishtha or Pakhangba. This Pakhangba was a popular figure in Manipur. He is considered as the first Manipuri king of whom we have many records. Manipur chronology has placed him to a date from 34 to 154 A.D. King Bhagychandra or Jai Singh (1759-98) was the 54th king of Manipur after Pakhangba.²⁶

Local chronicles

Like the Ahom kings of Assam, the Manipuri kings also were in the habit of recording the day-to-day incidents in chronicles. The early Manipuri literature consists of chronicles and many historical works. The most important of them is *Cheithaarol Kumbaaba* or the court chronicles. This describes the traditional history of Manipur from the second century A.D. onwards. The next important historical work *Ningthourol Lambubaa* narrates the military expansions of the kings of Manipur. The *Numitkaappa* gives us some old pre-Hindu mythological tales. The *Nugban Pombi Luwaoba* narrates the legendary history of the hero after whom the work is designated, and of his wife Konbru Namyno. The *Leithak Leikharon* gives an account of the Manipuri story of the creation. The *Chinarol* gives us a collection of romantic and heroic stories of ancient times. The *Poireiton Khunthokpa* is another work which traces Manipuri civilisation from the age of colonisation of the Manipur valley.²⁷

The 'National Romantic legend of Manipur'—the story of Khamba and Thoibi—bears historical character. It refers to the Manipuri court life around 1100 A.D.²⁸

The creation myths and the myths of the gods are recorded in the *Vijay Panchali* or history of Manipur by M. Jhulon Singh.

Sanskrit sources

The works in Manipuri like *Asvamedha*, *Janamejaya Sarpa Yajna* and *Virat Parva* point out the influence of Sanskrit literature among the people of Manipur. Arjuna's marriage with Chitrangada, daughter of the Manipur king Chitrabhanu is narrated in the Adi Parva of the *Mahabharata*.

“Mahendra parvatam dristva tapa sairupa sobhitam
samudra tirena sanai Manipuram jagamaha”

(*Mahabharata*, ch. 213)

The death of Arjuna in the hands of his own son Vabhruvahana figures in the Asvamedha Parva of the *Mahabharata*.

“tavat vanana tivrena sivo jalitakundalam
chinnam Parthasya tarasa nipapata dharatale”

(*Jaimini Mahabharata*, ch. 38/61-62)

The Samhita literatures also refer to the early civilisation of Manipur.

“Manipuram tatah khyatam tatonanyaddhi Bharata

....

Manipuresvaram bhupam sandarsano bhavet pura”

(‘Narada-Janamejaya Samvada ch.’, *Dharani Samhita*)

The land of Manipur is mentioned in the *Bhavisya Purana* along with other lands of eastern India.

“Varendra-Tamraliptancha Hedamva-Manipurakam
Lauhityantantraipuram chaiva Jayantakyam Susankgakam”

(‘Brahmakhanda ch.’, *Bhavisya Purana*)

The Tantra literatures also refer to the land of Manipur along with adjacent lands of Tripura, Jayantia and Cachar.

“Tripura Kaikika chaiva Jayanti Manichandrika
Kacchadi Magadhi Devi asvani sapta parvatah”

(*Komakhya Tantra*)

Another Tantra literature, *Rudra Yamala*, also refers to Manipur as a famous pilgrimage centre of India.

“Manipura devatirtham panchakundam sarovaram
tava sri kamana tirtha snati yo muktimicchanti”

(*Rudra Yamala Tantra*)

The *Krita Kalpadruma*, an important Sanskrit work devoted on Rajadharma, locates Manipur in eastern India beyond Kirat region.

"Purva Kiratah jasyante Manipurastatah puram
Chitrabhanu Gandharvyakhyam Manipure virajitah"
(*Kṛita Kalpadruma*)

Assamese literatures

There are a good number of Assamese Puthis, Vamsavalis and Buranjis (court chronicles) which incorporate information on Manipur. The *Vavruvahan Yuddha* by Haribar Bipra dated early fourteenth century A.D. gives an account of the battle fought between Arjuna and Vavruvahana, the king of Manipur. The Mahabharata, Asvamedha Parva by Gangadas Sen, dated sixteenth century A.D., describes Arjuna's victorious march to Manipur where he was defeated and killed by Vavruvahana. The *Darrangraj Vamsavali* by Suryakhari Daivajna, dated eighteenth century A.D., describes Manipur invasion of Koch king Nara Narayan.

Most of the Buranjis refer to the land of Manipur. The *Kamarupar Buranji* describes Manipur under Vavruvahana and gives a genealogy of the subsequent rulers of Manipur along with their administrative activities. Vavruvahana and his successors are credited with establishing new capitals, cities and rock-cut temples (pp. 5-7). The *Ahom Buranji* and the *Deodhai Assam Buranji* describe the history of Manipur during the first half of the sixteenth Century A.D. The names of the Manipuri rulers, Manipuri princesses and messengers along with their activities and valuable Manipuri presentations are narrated (*Ahom Buranji*, pp. 77-78; *Deodhai Assam Buranji*, p. 38). *Ahom Buranji* also records King Sutyinpha's activities in Manipur in 1648 A.D. (p. 131). Buranji sources also record King Rudra Singh's activities leading to the establishment of his friendship with the ruler of Manipur (*Assam Buranji*, H. K. Sadaramin, p. 63).

The history of Manipur from the reign of King Jai Singh to the time of King Churachand Singh is narrated in almost all the Buranjis (*Ahom Buranji*, pp. 286-352; *Assam Buranji*, H. K. Sadaramin, pp. 74-75; *Assam Buranji*, Haliram Dhekial Phukan, pp. 42f; *Assam Buranji*, K. N. Tamuli Phukan, pp. 45-46; *Assam Buranji*, Gunabhiram Barua, p. 154; *Tungkhungin*

Buranji, pp. 48-123; *Asamar Padya Buranji*, pp. 75-78; and *Asamar Buranji*, P. N. Gohain Barua, pp. 153-55).

The first Englishman to record the history of Manipur was Dr. J. P. Wade. He discusses elaborately Assam's relation with Manipur during the time of King Rajeswar Singh including important role played by the Manipuri princesses named Kuran-ganayani, Bhuvaneswari and Rupavati in Assam (*Account of Assam*, pp. 155-62).

Bengal letters

We get five letters exchanged between the Governor-General of India and other British authorities posted in north eastern India on the one hand and the rulers of Manipur on the other. The letter dated 1798 A.D. was written by King Jai Singh to the Governor-General of India. The letter dated 1815 A.D. was written by King Chaurjit Singh to the Governor-General. King Marjit Singh wrote two letters in 1818 A.D. of which one was addressed to Captain Davidson and the other was to the Magistrate of Sylhet. There is also another letter dated 1818 A.D. addressed to the ruler of Manipur by an officer of the Company posted in north-eastern India. These sources throw light on the contemporary political relations between the rulers of Manipur and the British authorities. These also describe details about the commodities of export trade from Manipur.

We get similarly six letters exchanged between the Governor-General of India and the rulers of Cachar. The first letter dated 1800 A.D. was written by King Krishnachandra Narayan and the other five written between 1815 and 1820 A.D. were by King Govindachandra. These letters describe the activities of several Manipur princes in Cachar.²⁰

Information from the Cachar district records

Forty-two official correspondences of the District Superintendents of Cachar supply valuable information on the history of Manipur during the period from 1840 to 1853 A.D. Of these eighteen were addressed to the Political Agent, Manipur, eight were sent to the Secretary, Government of India, Fort William, six were despatched to Magistrate and Police Superintendent of

Sylhet and the other ten were meant for various other Government (both civil and military) authorities posted in north-eastern India.³⁰

Unpublished Government documents

1. History of Manipur is narrated in the *Secret Consultations*, 1828-34 and the *Foreign Consultations*, 1851, 1856-57 and 1859. These are available in the National Archives, New Delhi.

2. We also get good information on Manipur from the *Manipur Agency Records*, 1874-1950. These are in possession of the Government of Assam and available for consultation at the State Archive, Dispur.

Published Government documents

Among the published Government documents there are reports, notes, accounts, despatches, extracts, memorandums and treaties dealing with the history of Manipur.

Reports

1. Report of Francis Buchanan Hamilton, 1807-14, deals with the history and culture of Manipur.

2. Walter Hamilton's Report on Manipur, 1820, deals with topography.

3. Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India by R. B. Pemberton, 1835, describes history, geography, economic condition, trade and commerce and means of communication of Manipur.

4. Report on the District of Cachar by Colonel Lister, 1853, describes the activities of the Mizos in Manipur.

5. Annual Report of the Manipur Political Agency for 1868-69 by Dr. Brown.

6. Report of the Political Officer with the Left Column of the Lushai Expedition, 1871-72, discusses Manipur's relation with the tribes on its southern frontier.

7. Report on the Survey Operations in the Naga Hills and Manipur by H. H. Godwin-Austen during the field-work season, 1872-73. This is devoted on topographical study.

8. Report on the 'Linguistic Survey of India', Vols. II and III, 1904, by Dr. G. A. Grierson.

Notes

1. Notes on the early history of Manipur, 'Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission', Vol. V, 1923, by A. F. M. Abdul Ali.

2. Some Notes on the Maring Nagas of Manipur, 'Man in India', Vol. VI, 1926.

Accounts

Major M. McCulloch : Account of the Valley of Munnipore and of the Hill Tribes with a comparative vocabulary of the Munnipore and other languages ; 'Selections from the Records of the Government of India', No. 27, Calcutta, 1859.

Despatches

Despatches from Mr. Crawford, 1827. Mr. Crawford, the British envoy discussed the dispute as regard boundaries of Manipur and Burma with the Burmese Ministers.

Extracts

1. Captain F. T. Grant, 'Extracts from a Journal kept during a Tour of Inspection on the Manipur Frontier along the course of the Ninghtee River etc. in January, 1832', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. III, 1834, pp. 124-34.

Memorandums

1. Memorandum by Major McCulloch, 1861. This presents a good deal of information about Manipur.

2. Memorandum by Col. J. Johnstone, 1896. It describes routes for troops to pass from Cachar to Manipur, Kohima to Manipur, Manipur to Kendat (Burma), suitable time for expedition, carriage and method of supply of food in the last part of the nineteenth century A.D.

Treaties and Agreements

1. Anglo-Manipur Treaties of 1833-34.

2. Agreement regarding compensation for the Kubo Valley, 1834.

The Gazetteers, the Statistical Accounts and miscellaneous works of many British Officers (both civil and military) also serve as valuable source-materials for the history and culture of Manipur. We may include the following works in this category :

1. *Statistical Account of Manipur*, R. Brown, 1873.
2. *Gazetteer of Manipur*, E. W. Dun, 1886.
3. *My Three Years in Manipur*, Miss E. S. C. Grimwood, 1891.
4. *My Experiences in Manipur and the Naga Hills*, J. Johnstone, 1896.
5. *Naga Hills and Manipur*, B. C. Allen, 1905.
6. *The Meithei*, T. C. Hodson, 1908.

The above account of the sources which we have appended here is by no means complete ; nevertheless it would provide a clear background for the preparation of a comprehensive and critical study on the history of Manipur. The writing of such a history has now become a desideratum simply on the ground that Manipur is an economically backward State and situated in an area of special strategic importance.

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- ²⁰ Phayre, A., *History of Burma*, p. 15.
- ²¹ Majumdar, R. C., *Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East*, Vol I ; *Champa*, 1922, pp. 13-14.
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SOURCES OF THE LATE MEDIEVAL AND MODERN HISTORY OF MANIPUR

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I

MANIPUR has a long historical tradition, and some scholars have traced its connections with the Epic and Puranic legends. The history of the State, however, entered into a crucial phase in the beginning of the eighteenth century A.D. when Garib Nawaz Pamheiba, the reigning monarch, was instrumental in the process of a social revolution through Bengal Vaisnavism. Bengali came into use for official correspondence, and the Bengali character for the Manipuri (Meitei) language. The history of the State can also be fully reconstructed since then with various categories of materials available in several languages. The descendants of Garib Nawaz ruled in Manipur for several generations, but an unfortunate historical phenomenon was wars and palace rebellions almost at every succession stage. One such rivalry resulted in the Burmese supremacy in Manipur in 1812 when Raja Marjit Singh occupied the throne of Manipur as a vassal of Burma, while Raja Gambhir Singh was installed on the throne by the British in 1826 as the ruler of a 'Protected State'. The failure of the Palace in 1891 to do away with the increasing interference of the British Agent in the affairs of the State reduced Manipur to the status of a tributary Princely State in British colonial system in India. The State voluntarily joined the Indian Union, Maharaja Bodhachandra Singh signing the Instrument of Accession on 15 October, 1949.

II

The materials for the study of late medieval and modern history of Manipur have been gleaned from literary, monumental, epigraphic, numismatic and archival sources. The State has an old tradition of preserving historical information through chronicles. While the early chronicles are in the Manipuri language and character, those of the eighteenth century and thereafter are in the Bengali character. Bengali and Sanskrit chronicles were composed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. W. Yumjao Singh's *Report on the Archaeological Studies in Manipur* (Imphal, 1935) and M. Khelchandra Singh's *Catalogue of Manipuri Manuscripts* (Imphal, 1972) and *Manipuri Language* (Imphal, 1975) contain lists and description of some chronicles. The oldest and most detailed is the royal chronicle, *Cheithaaryl Kumbaaba*, that professes to have recorded all the important daily transactions and occurrences of the State. The chronicle which is now available (published by the Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Imphal, 1967) was rewritten in Bengali character by order of Maharaja Jai Singh in the eighteenth century. The medieval chronicles in old archaic Manipuri like *Numit Kaappa*, *Leithaak Leikhaaryl* and *Ghaainaryl* deal with the pre-Vaisnavite mythological tales, story of the creation, legends about deities, and heroic stories of ancient time. The *Ningthourol Lumbabaa*, another medieval chronicle, is a historical work that gives an account of the military expansions of the Rajas of Manipur. The *Poireiton Khunthokpa*, possibly written in the seventeenth century, describes the process of migrations, settlements and social formations in the Manipur valley. The *Ningthourol Shinkok*, written possibly by a courtier of Garib Nawaz, describes, among other things, the part played by Garib Nawaz in the religious reforms of his time. The *Khulam Puran* is another useful historical work. *Vijay Panchali*, the voluminous political work in Bengali, gives a detailed history of Manipur from Garib Nawaz to Gambhir Singh, with some account of the pre-Garib Nawaz era. The first part of the chronicle was composed during the reign of Garib Nawaz, part two, during the reign of Bhagyachandra and part three, during the reign of Gambhir Singh and Nur Singh. Besides

political history, the chronicle contains adequate and useful materials on social, religious and economic history. The *Dharani Samhita*, another such chronicle, written at the time of Gambhir Singh, gives an account of the Manipur valley and its inhabitants.

The chronicles of the neighbouring States also contain information about Manipur. The *Darrabgraj Vamsavali*, the Coch chronicle in Assamese, and *Rajmala*, the Bengali chronicle of Tripura of the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries, describe the political relations of these States with Manipur. The Bengali chronicles of Cachar, that bordered immediately on Manipur and has long historical connections with the State, like *Gopichandrer Panchali* and *Kalicharan Upakhyān* (eighteenth century), supply interesting information. The Ahom and the Assamese *Buranjis* describe the nature of connection between Assam and Manipur in the eighteenth century. Manipur had political and commercial relations with Burma and the Shan States of China till the nineteenth century. The Burmese and the Shan chronicles are, therefore, sure to provide some materials for the study of the history of Manipur. The historians of Burma like Phayre and Harvey, have, in effect, indicated the relations on the basis of such chronicles. The Persian chronicles of Bengal are also occasionally helpful.

The oral traditions folk-tales and ballads also contain useful and interesting information, and the Manipur Sahitya Parishad at Imphal has done a commendable job by publishing some of them. In addition, the archaeological sources have proved to be valuable. The explorations and excavations conducted by W. Yumjao Singh in the thirties of the present century brought to notice, among other things, a number of medieval icons, utensils, cannons, musical instruments, inscriptions, sculptures and other artifacts, the details of which are available in his *Report on the Archaeological Studies of Manipur*. A number of medieval and modern temples, and secular buildings scattered all over the State have survived the stress and strain of time and circumstances. Almost all the medieval and modern rulers of Manipur issued coins on the occasion of their coronation, pilgrimage and victory

in wars. These coins are available in various museums in India and abroad and the texts have been published in catalogues and other numismatic works including P. L. Gupta's *Coins* (New Delhi, 1969). The medieval and modern rulers of Manipur also issued inscriptions and copperplates on various occasions and some of these have been published in M. Khelchandra Singh's *Manipuri Language* (Imphal, 1975) and few other monographs.

The most important category of the sources are of course the historical documents. The royal government maintained their day to day records and these are still preserved in the records section of the palace. The important families in the State, and more particularly the Meitei scholars, locally known as *Pandits*, also possess very valuable papers. Some of these are in old archaic Manipuri, and others in Bengali character. The official correspondences were maintained in Bengali. Mrs. Grimwood in her *My Three Years in Manipur*, p. 213 (London, 1891), shows that the letters written from the palace to the British Agent at Imphal were in Bengali. The Bengali letters of the Rajas to the East India Company in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are included in S. N. Sen's *Prachin Bangala Patra Sankalan* (Calcutta, 1942). Ever since the establishment of the British Political Agency in Manipur the records have been systematically maintained. The correspondence between the Royal Government and the Political Agent, the Political Agent and the British Government of India as well as the administrative reports and the reports of the political agency prepared annually are preserved in the Secretariat Records Office of the Manipur Government at Imphal. The other records to be found there are the proceedings of the Manipur Darbar, State Gazetteers and the administrative, revenue and judicial records. The papers on Manipur are also included in the Foreign Proceedings, Home Proceedings, Judicial Proceedings, Revenue Proceedings, Ecclesiastical Proceedings preserved in Asam Secretariat Records Office, Shillong, West Bengal Archives, Calcutta, National Archives, New Delhi, and India Office Library and Records, London. Useful information on the British policy in Manipur are found in the Parliamentary Papers, Political and Secret Despatches between Ind'a and the

Home, Minutes of the Governor-General, Court of Directors, Board of Revenue, and Reports of the Select Committees. The newspapers published both from Manipur and outside the State, particularly Calcutta, since the nineteenth century are of substantial help for studies in political development and public opinion. The records maintained by the village authorities, Local Bodies (e.g., Municipality), Political parties, Educational institutions, Churches are equally important for local self-government and the origin and growth of various institutions and organisations.

The private papers of the British Civilians, particularly those recently collected by the Cambridge South Asia Archives (England), are of treasured value. Notable among these are Gimson Papers, Taylor Papers, Whyte Papers and Stewart Papers. The private papers of C. Gimson, I.C.S., President of the Manipur Darbar during the stormy days of the Second World War, donated by his family to the Cambridge South Asia Archives, include Notes on the war in Manipur, early history and background, bombing of Imphal, civilian relation with army, and economic condition of the State. Mrs. A. W. Taylor, wife of a Civil Surgeon of Manipur, extensively toured the State during her stay there and maintained the Tour Diaries during 1937-42. Diary of a nine-day tour among the Tangkul Nagas describes her experiences and the customs and attitude of the people. The description of some Manipuri festivals that she attended in 1937 is contained in her letters written to friends and relations in Britain. The personal records of V. C. Whyte, a tea-planter of the Assam Company, are interesting for his notes, comments and criticism of the evacuation scheme during March—May, 1942 from Manipur and Naga Hills. Mrs. Elizabeth Stewart, wife of G. P. Stewart of the Manipur Service, has recorded her experience in Manipur in 24 letters she wrote in 1946 from Imphal to her parents in New Zealand. Attempts can be made to collect the private papers of the political leaders and those connected with the administrative and political processes during the colonial and post-colonial period. The memoirs, journals, monographs and autobiographies published by the

British officers are indeed informative. Some collections of important records are also available in print. *The White Papers on Indian States, Manipur Code, Manipur State Constitution, 1947, History of the Manipur Police* (Imphal, 1961), *Correspondence relating to Manipur* (Calcutta, 1891), W. H. Demp's *Diary and Report of Manipur Boundary Commission* (Rangoon, 1884), J. Clark's *Prices of Manipur Correspondence* (Calcutta, 1879), C. U. Atchinson's *Treaties, Engagement and Sanads*, Vol. II (Calcutta, 1900), H. Wilson's *Documents Illustrative of the Burmese War* (Calcutta, 1827) are among them.

In the post-independence period, the spate of political and literary tracts far outweigh the official records and publications. The debates in the legislature and parliament and pamphlets of the political and social organisations increase the sources of the contemporary history. The most prolific source of information is the programme of action and memoranda of the parties. The newspaper reports and comments undoubtedly constitute important materials for the contemporary period and the conflicting and contradictory nature of the information make searching enquiries most challenging.

III

The nature and dependability of the source materials on Manipur are encouraging to scholars. The scope is however somewhat limited for scientific research on the late-medieval (i.e., seventeenth-eighteenth centuries) period as one has largely to depend on the chronicles and traditions. The chronicles stand the risk of being biased as the authors are generally the courtiers and suffer from the tendency to magnify the deeds of the reigning monarchs at the cost of their adversaries. The traditions that are orally handed down through generations sometime undergo transformation either at the sweet will or ignorance of the narrators. The chronicles are nevertheless among the accepted sources of historical studies and the traditions are more and more being utilised particularly in the absence of other sources. A

scientific method is however yet to be applied for using these two classes of source materials. The information given by them may be verified from other sources at least to the extent they are not contradicted. In case of Manipur the scope of cross-verification through written sources is not impossible though. The royal papers and the records in a private collection at the palace can come to the rescue. The genealogies, chronicles and royal decrees and orders are not exhaustive, but their implications can hardly be questioned.

The information supplied through these sources are by and large limited to political history, namely, the history of royal genealogy, military wars and conquests and the other administrative. The scope of understanding the social and economic condition is extremely limited. Nevertheless the administrative nomenclature and epigraphic evidence can be comparatively analysed and interpreted. The mention of the social institutions and festivals in the chronicles offer some insight in the social history. As the tradition is current among the people about the great country like legends, the literature and historical records there may throw some light. The living history may be a hindrance for understanding the past. It is necessary to study social and economic institutions and communities and also in the geographical situation. The development is backward and primitive. There is not much scope for the society to change because of the change that has occurred in the mode of transport through the introduction of British Vastations in the late nineteenth period is easily discernible from literary, historical, epigraphic and archaeological evidences. Any other social change was bound to register its mark in a visible form.

There is no dearth of materials for studying the history of Manipur and there is not at all want of sources of which some primary are not available. The secondary sources have varied much as the documents, chronicles, the other records of sources that are also not enough. The sources of the same materials might on the contrary cause some confusion because the documents, both official and non-official, cannot be analysed of the Government of Manipur as well as the British period.

agency in Manipur and the British Government of India constitute the major source of information. There are also private papers of the officials and non-officials—European and Manipuri. The local sources, including literature and newspapers, most convincingly represent the local views. The memoirs, journals and monographs are descriptive and informative. The tradition of the colonial days is still green among the people and facts can be recovered through modern methods of questionnaires and schedules, interviews and field observations. The existence of multiple data provide enough scope for verification through internal and external criticism of the facts and documents. The various classes of evidences can be complementary to each other on supplying more information, while additional records can help resolve the contradictions. The time-space continuum in historical process, historical relativism and fallacies, the historicism of development and continuity as fundamental characteristic of historical process, historical determinism, the concept of progress, time theory, and above all, the philosophy of history would arm the researchers with method and imagination.

IV

The history of historical research in Manipur began with the British officers. They served in Manipur, gained an intimate knowledge and understanding of the society, studied its past, and their works are partly historical and partly of the nature of report on the situation of their own time and, as such, can also be used as source-materials. R. B. Pemberton, who served as Joint Commissioner of Manipur, was the pioneer in this direction. His *Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India* (Calcutta, 1835) includes a section on Manipur which is the result of sustained research. W. McCulloch, who served in Manipur for a long period of twenty-seven years, first as Assistant Political Agent and then as Political Agent, and married in the royal family of Manipur, in his *An Account of the Valley of Manipur and the Hill Tribes* (Calcutta, 1859) has made contributions in ethnography and history of Manipur. The next Political Officer,

Dr. R. Brown's *Statistical Account of Manipur* (Calcutta, 1874) is a study on history, ethnography, economy, polity and culture. E. W. Dun's *Gazetteer of Manipur* (Calcutta, 1886) and B. C. Allen's *Assam District Gazetteers*, Vol. IX (Calcutta, 1905) are as descriptive as any Gazetteer compiled by a British officer in India. Ethel St. Clair Grimwood, wife of the ill-fated Political Agent of Manipur (Frank Grimwood), in her *My Three Years in Manipur* (London, 1891) gives graphic account of the Manipur Tragedy of 1891, besides occasional mention of its history, culture, language and literature, economic condition, social institutions, sports and festivals. James Johnstone's *My Experiences in Manipur and the Naga Hills* (London, 1896) provides interesting data on ethnography and the process of change in the nineteenth century. T. C. Hodson, an Assistant Political Agent of Manipur, made valuable contributions to historical and ethnological studies on Manipur. His *The Meithei* (London, 1908) and *The Naga Tribes of Manipur* (London, 1911) are still considered as standard monographs. He made use of the Manipuri chronicles that were translated by Babu Nithor Nath Banerjee and Babu Umes̃h Chandra Ghosh. Hodson also published a number of articles on Manipur in various learned journals (e.g., *JASB*, XXII, 1853). Another important contributor to the journals was G. H. Dumant of the Indian Civil Service (e.g., *JASB*, XVI, I, XIV, pt. I, *JRAS*, New Series, XII).

In addition to the British officers of Manipur, a number of historical writings by the British civilians of Bengal and Assam also cover different aspects of Manipur's history. These include E. T. Dalton's *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), Sir Alexander Mackenzie's *History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes on the North East Frontier of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1884), Francis Hamilton's *An Account of Assam* (London, 1820), Walter Hamilton's *Historical, Statistical and Descriptive Account of Hindoostan* (London, 1820), William Robinson's *A Descriptive Account of Assam* (Calcutta, 1842) and *North-East Frontier* (London, 1914).

The local historians have also done some studies and their publications are available in Manipuri, Bengali and English;

Mukundalal Choudhury's *Manipur Itihas* (Imphal, 1893) which was written immediately after the Manipur War of 1891 gives a vivid account of the war and is partly a source-book on the incident. Another work in Bengali, *Manipurer Itihas* (Calcutta, 1970) by Jyotirmay Roy, covers all periods of the history of Manipur. Nalini Kumar Bhadra's *Bichitra Manipur* in Bengali and R. K. Sanahal Singh's *Manipur Itihas* in Manipuri are informative; W. Yumjao Singh's *Report on the Archaeological Studies in Manipur* (Imphal, 1935) is a study of archaeological remains excavated by him and includes notes on coins, inscriptions and manuscripts which he had collected. Jyotirmay Roy's *History of Manipur* (Calcutta, 1958) and L. M. Iboongopal Sing's *Introduction to Manipur* (Imphal, 1960) are among the early works by local historians in English language and based mainly on local sources. R. K. Jhalajit Singh's *A Short History of Manipur*, R. K. Sanahal Singh's *Glimpses of Manipur*, Abdul Ali's *Notes on the Early History of Manipur*, Janab Khan's *Manipuri Muslims* deserve mention among the recent works. Dr. Chandramani Singh's dissertation, *British Relations with Manipur*, and Lal Dena's *British Policy in Manipur* are yet to be available in print. The official publication, *History of Manipur Police* (Imphal, 1961) and N. I. Singh's *Administration of Manipur* (Imphal, 1977) are on administrative history.

Some works on the north-eastern sentinel of India as a whole also cover Manipur. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee's *Kiratajana Kriti* (Calcutta, 1950), *Place of Assam in the History and Civilisation of India* (Gauhati, 1955) and *Adivasi Literature of India* (New Delhi, 1974), and R. M. Nath's *Background of Assamese Culture* (Shillong, 1949) include discussion on history and culture of Manipur. Sir Edward Gait's *A History of Assam* (London, 1905) has a chapter on Manipur, and Pandit P. N. Bhattacharjee's *A Critical Study of Gait's History of Assam* (Allahabad, 1905) is complementary to the former. A. C. Banerjee's *Eastern Frontier of British India* (Calcutta, 1943), R. M. Lahiri's *Annexation of Assam* (Calcutta, 1954), H. K. Barpujari's *Assam : In the Days of the Company* (Gauhati, 1964) deal with British expansionism

in north-east India. A. C. Choudhury's *Shrihatler Itibritta* (Sylhet, 1316 B.S.) and U. C. Guha's *Cacharer Itibritta* (Dacca, 1921), both in Bengali, provide some discussion on the history of Manipur.

Besides Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. III (Calcutta, 1904), some fairly exhaustive works have come out on language and literature. Three of them are the Manipur Sahitya Parishad's *Glimpses of Manipuri Language, Literature and Culture* (Imphal, 1970) and *Manipuri Language and Literature* (Imphal, 1979) and N. Khelchandra Singh's *Ariba Manipuri Sahityagi Itihas* (Imphal, 1969); some publications are also available on folk-tales, legends and tradition. N. Khelchandra Singh's *Chaada Laaihui* (Family history and origin of the mothers of Meitei kings), *Naothingkhong Phambal Kaaba* (Accession of Naothingkhong to the throne of Manipur), *Chasinaral* (Collection of romantic and heroic stories of the past), *Khumalon* (Origin of the Khuman dynasty), etc. fall in this class. The progress of Christianity and missionary education have been discussed in T. Luikham's *A Short History of the Manipur Baptist Christian Jubilee* (Imphal, 1918), Rochunga Pudait's *The Education of the Hmar People* (Sielmat, 1963), T. Lunkim's B.D. Thesis of the Serampore College, *St. Paul's Teaching on Unity and its application to the Churches in Manipur* (1964). The *Jadonang, a Freedom Fighter of Manipur* (Imphal, 1971)—commemoration volume of the 40th Death Anniversary of the well-known Naga leader of Manipur, is a collection of a number of articles on the anti-British agitation by the Nagas of Manipur in form of historic Zeliangron Movement.

V

The above list of publications on Manipur is by no means exhaustive. It is only illustrative, and can be elaborated. There are a large number of articles that have appeared in journals and magazines in various languages, particularly in English, Manipuri and Bengali. Nevertheless, the progress of research in the history of Manipur is not very encouraging. The writings of the British

officers have conspicuously suffered from the colonial bias. They were basically administrators, and were asked by the supreme authority of the colonial government to prepare the reports and monographs. The object was to help the government to plan their various policies and to guide those officers involved in the process of execution and implementation. The intention was not research, but the promotion of the colonial scheme. The sensitive issues were more carefully underlined to caution the officers about the peculiarities of the 'strange people'. The weaknesses of the social structure, customs and institutions, economic system and technology were sometime over-emphasised to project the possibility of salvation through the values of the West. The lighter aspects of the way of life like sports and festivals, folk songs and dances were appreciated to gain cheap popularity among the 'natives'. The theory very strongly built up by the colonial official historiography in India citing the myths and legends said to be till then current among the people that all the tribes and communities originated elsewhere outside the Indian boundary has presented the present generation of the Indian historians with a bundle of puzzles. The suggestion of the monographers about the Meiteis as well as the hill people of Manipur that they all came from Burma and other countries of south-east Asia naturally leads one to confusion about the earlier inhabitants of the State. The colonial theories of migration need searching enquiries on the part of the local historians.

The studies of the contemporary historians are also generally limited to political history. The method applied in most cases is either empirical or universal, and the output does not proceed much beyond compilation of facts in the form of narration of events. The scientific analyses are yet to be resorted to, where objective or subjective approach might depend on the nature of the source-materials and identification of the problem. Where the available facts are disjointed, the historical imagination can help content analysis. The data are to be examined, interpreted and analysed with reference to similar and contrasting situation.

The social and economic history have practically been so far completely neglected by the historians, although in these areas the

Manipur situation is extremely significant. The State had received ethnic and racial streams from neighbouring Bengal and Burma that led to the emergence of a composite society in the ancient period. The segment of Aryan settlers in Manipur pushed their way to Burma, and the leaders of adventures succeeded in establishing political authority in parts of south-east Asia. This process of social formation cannot escape the notice of the historians. The explanations have also to be found for complete assimilation of the Brahmins and high caste Hindus and the Muslims who went to Manipur since the late medieval period into the Meitei society. This might be due to geographical isolation or political alienation following the emergence of powerful monarchy or to the inner strength of the society; but the answer has to be found from convincingly searching enquiries. The way the Bengal Vaishnavism in Manipur took a local character without disturbing the indigenous customs and usages, and the factors that influenced the revivalist movements in the form of Apokpa Marup and Sanamahi deserve urgent attention of the scholars. The studies on this problem has very high social relevance in view of the current agitation in Manipur that has been mounting up over the years. The story that Santidas Goswami was instrumental in destroying some literary works in old Manipuri scripts and language and introduced the Bengali character needs an objective verification. Equally necessary is a proper assessment of the contributions of the Manipuris to the Indian art and culture and their patronage to Vaishnava movement in Bengal and role in enriching the Bengali culture vis-a-vis the contribution of the Bengali religious preachers and immigrants to the Manipuri literature and culture and economy. This will certainly promote national cause. A study of the process of Sanskritisation, the factors that promoted the process, and its impact on the polity, society and economy of the State will indeed be meaningful. The emergence and role of the middle class in the political and social processes in the monarchical and colonial context can provide areas of absorbing interest. No attempt has so far been made to study the history of social change as well.

The economic history of the State, particularly the pattern

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of land-holding, indigenous raw-materials and manufactures, art and crafts and industry, the export and import, the nature of trans-frontier trade as well as the cross-country trade with China and Burma can be meaningfully studied. The Chinese and the Burmese traders frequenting the markets in Manipur till the last century is known from the records, and the weaving industry of Manipur has survived the stress and strain of time and circumstances. The process of change from traditional barter economy to money economy, the impact of the introduction of the European piece-goods and the changing life-style of people on local crafts and economy provide interesting areas of research. The comments made by C. Gimson, President of the Manipur Darbar, in a private letter preserved in the Cambridge South Asia Archives offer an extremely interesting clue about the impact of World War II on the economy of the State. It says : "You can imagine the effect of the influx of money on the economy of the State. Because of its isolation Manipur had been greatly independent economically. The people grew their own food and cotton and silk, made their own clothes and provided their own entertainment. Food was plentiful, money scarce and price low. Then came the army with fabulous amount of money, wanting to buy everything.... Wages rose from annas 4 to Rs. 5/- a day, rice from Rs. 1/5/- a sack (?) to Rs. 40/-, or even Rs. 60/-, and other things in proportion." Mrs. Elizabeth Stewart, wife of G. P. Stewart of Manipur Service, on the other hand, claimed that "the Second World War brought more promise and helped development in Manipur". Such contrasting views can be thrashed out only through research.

Although some commendable studies have been published on the Manipuri language and literature, a comparative study with the languages of the adjoining areas would perhaps suggest the historical connections as linguistics is being more and more considered as an important tool for understanding the origin of the speakers of a particular language, the route followed during migrations and relations maintained in the past with various groups of people. The Meitei-Bishnupriya controversy on

respective claim as earlier Manipuris can be sorted out when the history of the two communities is studied on the basis of linguistic and archival data. The history of the education in modern time and the missionary activities and the impact of the West on the life and condition of the Manipuris have not been studied so far. The political movements during the British period, the anti-British plots and upsurge (i.e., Kuki Rebellion and Zeliangrong Movement) as well as the political development since 1947 are among the other areas that have not received justice at the hands of the historians. To put squarely, the studies are in rudimentary form. The things are in searching stage, and the research is to follow.



5 • Tripura

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF TRIPURA (MONUMENTAL REMAINS)

DR. RATNA DAS

(Curator, Government Museum, Agartala, Tripura)

RICH in natural resources, ethnologically interesting as habitat of tribal and non-tribal communities and attractive for its scenic splendour, the present State of Tripura (22°56 and 24°32 north and 91°1 and 92°21 east) was known as Hill Tipperah in the British period.¹ It was uninterruptedly ruled by a dynasty of members with 'Manikya' ending names since the beginning of the fifteenth century A.D. till its merger in Indian Union in 1949. In ancient times Tripura seems to have developed to a large extent. But no records in the shape of documents or monuments of the autochthonous people of the land belonging to pre-historic or proto-historic periods have been recovered. Here the archaeological problems, baffling enough in themselves, have been magnified by geography, climate and local conditions, very different from the other parts of the country. The peculiar character of its remoteness and isolation, its difficult communication due to prolonged monsoon and forest-clad hillocks did not allow the archaeologists or historians to have a closer look into her shrouded past. Indeed with gradual development of communications and discovery of objects proves that there is no dearth of archaeological evidences in Tripura which can be used as source-material of history which is still an untrodden field. Though some of such evidences have been utilised by some scholars² comparably, they are very meagre. A closer study of monumental remains in the context of various branches of history is yet to be done. Such study is expected to be rewarding in throwing flood of lights not only on regional history but on history of India as a whole. Our knowledge of

the history and culture of Tripura is far from complete. Inadequacy of the use of definite chronological and historical data has impeded us to make a connected narrative of this State from earliest times. Culturally, it is rich as evident from a number of relics of art and architecture, majority of which are lying in the hills and jungles incognito due to our indifference and negligence. Manifestly, without their proper evaluation in a wider aspect, the cultural history of India will remain incomplete, and in fact they have not received the attention they deserve. It is the utmost belief of the present writer that a critical study of such remains will be effective to underline the part played by Tripura in the fabric of Indian history. Of the archaeological sources of the history of Tripura, monumental remains are the most important as they throw flood of lights on history of religion, art, iconography, architecture and enable one to trace out the various stages of the development of culture and civilization in ancient and medieval Tripura. Next come the coins and epigraphy which are also rich in variety and vast in number and which have been amply used by scholars. As it is not possible to cover all the sources in such a small spectrum, I would like to restrict my discussion on monumental remains only which have never been used as a source of history of Tripura.

Tripura is one of those strategically located areas wherein diverse civilization and cultures met in the past. Lying at the cross-roads of Assam and Bengal, it was probably connected with Burma via land-routes through Gomati, Surma and Cachar valley, Lushai hills and Manipur on the one hand and via Chittagang, Arakan on the other. Perhaps it was through the latter route in the eleventh-twelfth centuries that the kingdoms of Pattikera and Burma maintained relations among themselves.⁹ Although the city of Pattikera cannot be identified, it must have been situated within the district of Tripura (modern Comilla district, Bangladesh), for an important place near Mainamati hills is still known as Paikora, which had been under the administration of the Manikya rulers of Tripura even before the partition of India. Tripura's link with Arakan appears to have been effected via Chittagang and Govindamanikya (1661-67 A.D.), a

ruler of Tripura is said to have taken shelter in Arakan court due to turmoil in his motherland⁴ and he most probably used the same route. From the north through Assam valley came the Chinese⁵ as well as different tribal immigrants of Indo-Mongoloid race of whom the Bodo-speaking group deserves a special mention. They spread over the whole of Brahmaputra valley and extended to Tripura in the shape of Tipra tribe. Peoples of ethnically similar groups gathered in the Nawgang-Cachar area of Assam and they maintained contact with Bengal, particularly with Srihatta sector which considerably influenced the cultural history of Tripura. Bengal had a happy cultural relation with Burma, and, probably, it was through the passes of Tripura this cultural trend migrated. Moreover, where colonization and trade linked together parts of south-east Asia, or the Buddhist missionaries came from the said region via sea-routes visit Bodhgaya and other sacred places, they have had to pass from or to Bengal through land routes via Tripura to reach the destination. Being situated in such cross-roads of different cultural waves, Tripura experienced the blending of Bengal and south-east Asian (particularly Burmese) culture on its soil. As a result, apart from other factors, this both way assimilation of extraneous elements with the local idioms gave rise to a regional mixed culture, typical of Tripura, which is an important phase towards the development of art and culture of eastern India.

In the later period through its unguarded western gates, the Muslims entered Tripura and attacked it on many occasions. But physical features and natural factors like mountain fastness and dense forests, unsuitable climate, extensive rains and floods and consequent difficulties in movement helped the Tripura rulers in offering resistance to the alien aggressors. As a result, the Muslims could not effect the cultural life of Tripura much as they did in cultures of many other parts of India. While indigenous creative impulses of the people appear to have received set-back in their expression elsewhere the local Hindu dynasty survived and ruled till recently in Tripura. Notwithstanding the occasional influence of Muslims, the monumental remains of the later period remained essentially indigenous with distinctive styles of their own.

The population of Tripura is largely a collection of Indo-Mongoloid group of tribes and the people who came from west, particularly from Bengal. Matrimonial relations of the royal families of Tripura with different States of India paved the way for the transmission of different elements in its art and culture. Various racial and cultural elements of other parts of India are discernible in the cultures in both hills and plains of Tripura.⁶ In short, the population being a composite one, the culture of the land has been heterogenous in content, but with the passage of time and growth the spirit of toleration and ideal of homogeneity has laced the complex life and culture of Tripura.

Local variations in the cultural life of Tripura itself are also worth noticing. The cause of this phenomenon perhaps lies in the topographical difference. Since the time of Ratnamanikya (1464-67 A.D.), the first historical king of Tripura, the socio-political life of south and western plains of Tripura had been dynamic whereas that of northern hilly areas static and primitive. Well administered Government was comparatively at work in the plains of Tripura since the fifteenth century while the northern hilly region was perhaps controlled by the chiefs of *kirata* people who were semi-nomadic due to their mode of agriculture (shifting cultivation) and lack of mutual understanding between themselves. Such varying socio-political conditions in different sectors of Tripura led to cultural differences. Plains of southern and west Tripura were more easily and intensively Aryanised and they witnessed a commendable development of art and architecture, mainly due to the patronage of the royal family, while no noteworthy remains (except Unokoti culture-complex which is again sporadic in nature) have so far been discovered in north. It is probable that the lack of mutual understanding and bickerings among the tribes of the north and their constant moving from one place to another in search of food, did not give them scope for expressing their creative impulses. The non-idolatric type of religion as practised by those tribes may have been another reason for the absence of religious sculptures. It is in the aforesaid context the monumental remains of Tripura are to be comprehended and used as sources of history. For the convenience of work, the relics may be divided into two broad classification,

namely, architecture and sculpture. While the political history of ancient Tripura is still shrouded in obscurity, its cultural history is gradually becoming clearer with the help of these evidences. These commendable treasures testify to the rich heritage of Tripura in the realm of Indian history. All these specimens of bygone days seem to suggest that delectable handicrafts of Tripura of the present days are but the products of a people with an old art heritage. Regrettably, however, the output that has been recovered so far, is not quantitatively as considerable as one may expect. This is due to the natural factors such as humid climate and perishable materials of which they were made. Besides, lack of systematic exploration and excavation has also been a cause of inadequacy of findings in Tripura. Notwithstanding such impediments, what we have been able to recover, is not at all negligible.

Prior to discussion of the monumental remains, a few words on some of the important sites will not be irrelevant, as these places are not familiar to our readers. Among the sites, notable are Pilak, and Udayapura in south Tripura and Unokoti in the north.

Pilak⁷ and its adjacent mouja Jolaibadi are the extensive plains of Belonia, one of the southern sub-divisions of Tripura. The ancient mounds of this region, situated in a low-lying area, are now being largely converted into agricultural fields and homestead lands. In course of these operations, many antiquities including stone and metal sculpture, terracotta-plaques and sealings have come to light. They may be ascribed to the seventh-twelfth centuries and have got a close stylistic affinity with those recovered from Mainamati culture complex and Chittagong. Pilak yields monumental sculptures in stone and statuettes in metal (*astadhatu*) affiliated to Brahmanism and Buddhism. This particular artistic trend and iconographic practices were in vogue in south-eastern Bengal which is evidenced from different sites in Bangladesh. It is important to note that Pilak is perhaps the only site of this type to exist in India, others being situated in Bangladesh. It is regrettable enough that this rich site has failed to draw the attention of archaeologists and historians.

Udayapura

About 55 kilometer (south-east) away from Agartala, the capital city of Tripura, Udayapura enjoyed the position of the capital of Tripura from fifteenth century up to the first half of eighteenth century. A number of black-stone sculptures of eleventh-twelfth centuries of East-Indian School of medieval art have been recovered from this place. Barring a few stray specimens, this type of black-stone sculptures in bulk has not been found elsewhere in Tripura. Moreover, all the representative examples of temple architecture of the medieval period are situated at this place.

Unokoti

Unokoti, a picturesque place with its hills, jungles and streamlets is situated at Kailashahar sub-division of north Tripura. Here on a vertical rock cliff extending over a mile, numerous massive rock-cut sculptures are encountered (average height of the sculptures is 33'). Besides these rock-cuts, the remains at Unokoti consist of a number of sandstone sculptures, scattered here and there, stone pavements, debris of bricks and stones, brick basements of temples, etc. One may feel by standing atop the hill, the vastness of this culture-complex which was once full of vigour and beauty, and was busy with number of visitors and pilgrims. The place is one of the most important archaeological sites of India, if we consider the massive and stupendous rock-cut figures which do not conform to any iconoclastic prescription of Indian art idiom. Unfortunately, however, they have not received the attention they deserve.

The monumental remains of ancient period so far recovered from the present land of Tripura, include stone, metal, and terracotta sculptures. In regard to the architectural relics of this period the position of Tripura is worse than her neighbour Bengal. While materials in the shape of representations of the temple types depicted in the sculptural art or manuscript painting have enabled us to reconstruct the history of architecture of ancient Bengal, Tripura has not yielded any such remains except a single type of *stupa* portrayed on the backslabs of

Buddhist sculptures and some terracotta sealings recovered from Pilak. The probable reasons of the non-availability of old monuments lie in the damp climate, perishable building materials, thick growth of vegetation and the iconoclastic fury of the Muslim invaders. Thousands of large-sized bricks (12"×10" in size) with smooth surface and moulded plaques similar to those of Mainamati, have been found scattered at Pilak and they point to the existence of brick-edifices which were contemporaneous with Mainamati culture-complex. Like Pilak, the other notable site Unokoti, has also yielded bricks and stone slabs and a plinth (little of which is exposed). Another place, named as Boxanagar in Sonamura sub-division, situated near the Comilla-Tripura border, yields such type of bricks. This site contains three huge mounds of which one is slightly exposed and a part of old construction is revealed there. Presumably many such architectural monuments are lying buried, only to be revealed by the spade of archaeologists in the near future.

As stated earlier, except single type of *stupa* portrayed on the back-slabs of Buddhist sculptures and sealings, no example of ancient edifice is available in Tripura to date to reconstruct the history of architecture in ancient Tripura. This *stupa* type is exactly similar in form to the seventh-century bronze votive *stupa* found at Ashrafpur (Dacca, Bangladesh).⁸ This type of *stupa* architecture was also prevalent at Mainamati as evident from some sealings. The *stupas* at Asrafpur, Pilak and Mainamati belong to one type: it consists of a square base, a circular drum, a hemispherical dome, and a harmika with finials. The dome bulges little towards the top in each case. As a result the *stupas* are endowed with a contour like that of the bell-shaped *stupas* of Burma of later days. We may venture to suggest that this type of *stupa* type went to Burma from Bengal through the passes of Tripura sometime in the eighth-ninth century A.D.

We are in a better position, however, as regards the architecture of later period. From the extant edifices, it is evident that the temple building activity started in the early sixteenth or towards the end of the fifteenth century, under the patronage of the Manikya rulers of Tripura and practically came to a close

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Unokoti

Unokoti, a picturesque place with its hills, jungles and streamlets is situated at Kailashahar sub-division of north Tripura. Here on a vertical rock cliff extending over a mile, numerous massive rock-cut sculptures are encountered (average height of the sculptures is 33'). Besides these rock-cuts, the remains at Unokoti consist of a number of sandstone sculptures, scattered here and there, stone pavements, debris of bricks and stones, brick basements of temples, etc. One may feel by standing atop the hill, the vastness of this culture-complex which was once full of vigour and beauty, and was busy with number of visitors and pilgrims. The place is one of the most important archaeological sites of India, if we consider the massive and stupendous rock-cut figures which do not conform to any iconoclastic prescription of Indian art idiom. Unfortunately, however, they have not received the attention they deserve.

The monumental remains of ancient period so far recovered from the present land of Tripura, include stone, metal, and terracotta sculptures. In regard to the architectural relics of this period the position of Tripura is worse than her neighbour Bengal. While materials in the shape of representations of the temple types depicted in the sculptural art or manuscript painting have enabled us to reconstruct the history of architecture of ancient Bengal, Tripura has not yielded any such remains except a single type of *stupa* portrayed on the backslabs of

Buddhist sculptures and some terracotta sealings recovered from Pilak. The probable reasons of the non-availability of old monuments lie in the damp climate, perishable building materials, thick growth of vegetation and the iconoclastic fury of the Muslim invaders. Thousands of large-sized bricks (12"×10" in size) with smooth surface and moulded plaques similar to those of Mainamati, have been found scattered at Pilak and they point to the existence of brick-edifices which were contemporaneous with Mainamati culture-complex. Like Pilak, the other notable site Unokoti, has also yielded bricks and stone slabs and a plinth (little of which is exposed). Another place, named as Boxanagar in Sonamura sub-division, situated near the Comilla-Tripura border, yields such type of bricks. This site contains three huge mounds of which one is slightly exposed and a part of old construction is revealed there. Presumably many such architectural monuments are lying buried, only to be revealed by the spade of archaeologists in the near future.

As stated earlier, except single type of *stupa* portrayed on the back-slabs of Buddhist sculptures and sealings, no example of ancient edifice is available in Tripura to date to reconstruct the history of architecture in ancient Tripura. This *stupa* type is exactly similar in form to the seventh-century bronze votive *stupa* found at Ashrafpur (Dacca, Bangladesh).⁸ This type of *stupa* architecture was also prevalent at Mainamati as evident from some sealings. The *stupas* at Asrafpur, Pilak and Mainamati belong to one type: it consists of a square base, a circular drum, a hemispherical dome, and a harmika with finials. The dome bulges little towards the top in each case. As a result the *stupas* are endowed with a contour like that of the bell-shaped *stupas* of Burma of later days. We may venture to suggest that this type of *stupa* type went to Burma from Bengal through the passes of Tripura sometime in the eighth-ninth century A.D.

We are in a better position, however, as regards the architecture of later period. From the extant edifices, it is evident that the temple building activity started in the early sixteenth or towards the end of the fifteenth century, under the patronage of the Manikya rulers of Tripura and practically came to a close

in the last part of the eighteenth century due to decadence of the royal power. We are not in a position to solve the problem arising out of a big hiatus, since eighteenth centuries, though this period of hiatus sees immense progress in the history of art. Better we wait for the spade of archaeologists to solve the problem. Most of the temples are concentrated at Udayapura which had been the capital of Tripura till the first half of the eighteenth century and have disclosed 'a forgotten chapter of Indian architectural development'. A survey of Tripura temples now in various stages of preservation amply bears out the fact that they architecturally form a compact group and they may be divided into two sub-groups, namely, (a) *charchala stupa sirsha* temples and (b) three storeyed tower-like edifices¹⁰. Built of brick¹¹ the edifices of group (a) are constituted of two individual structural members e.g., *torana* or the gateway and the single porched *nava* sanctum. *Torana* is a *dechala* construction while shrine is the combination of *charchala* sanctum and a low height *charchala* porch interlocked with each other, both the porch and sanctum being supported by tapering pilasters on four corners. Ground plan of the majority of sanctum is round inside and square from outside. A built-in chelisk is placed in centre of the sanctum to be used as altar for the deity. On the humped surface of the roof of the porch and sanctum stand the crownings which give these temples of Tripura an uncommon character. This crowning is a *stupa* with its component parts¹². The crowning *stupa* in individual examples seemingly belongs to a common tradition, the distinction being merely in minor details. Majority of the edifices had monolithic arched gateway, some of which are inscribed¹³. This type of temples are lying scattered all over Tripura in various stages of preservation, Udayapura being the major seat of such edifices. Among the buildings of this group, Tripura Sundari temple is the earliest extant shrine, built in Saka 1423 by Dhanya manikya. Since then numbers of such type of temples were built in Udayapura, Amarapura, Kalyanapura, old Agartala and Kamansagar. They are mostly dedicated to Vishnu, Ambika and Girija.

As stated earlier, these temples may be designated as *stupa sirsha-charchala* type of edifices and not the *stupa sirsha-bhadra*¹⁴

or tiered type of temples illustrated in the early medieval manuscript paintings of eastern India. There are reasons to believe that the *chala* or hut type structure with sloping curvilinear roof derived from the thatch and bamboo prototype, the sloping roof being devised to cope with the excessive rainfall and to off-set damage caused by luxuriant growth of vegetation. And in eastern India where rainfall is more than abundant, hut type brick temple was a natural preference by the local people from very early period. But while in course of time, architects of the other parts of India evolved new forms with permanent building materials, Tripura failed to adopt them, mainly because of her climatic condition and of non-availability of stone. Moreover, the similar temple architecture of Bengal exercised no mean influence on the monuments of Tripura. But the importance of Tripura temples does not lie in the hut-shaped super-structures alone. It is the crowning which gives the monuments of Tripura a novel and unusual form in Indian architecture. As noted above, *stupa* with its component part is a very uncommon crowning in Indian monuments. No structural analogue of the type exists anywhere in India. A few temples at Pagan in Burma Aboeyadana, Patathanya, Nagayon, Payathonju¹⁵ and Nat-halang Kyang,¹⁶ each shows a complete *stupa* as the upper element, though tiered roof of the Pagan examples has been replaced by the *churchala* roof in our edifices. The Burmese elements may hence be considered at the structural counterparts of the temples of Tripura. At the same time it shows extension of religious toleration on the part of a Hindu Kingdom where an idiom, especially associated with Buddhism, is used in Brahmanical edifices.

(A) *Stupa-sirsha* temples

Stupa-sirsha temples were not unknown in eastern India as is evidenced from the illustrations of Cambridge University manuscript of *Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita* copied in Newa samvat 135.¹⁷ Since the eleventh century nothing has been heard about the said type of shrines. How was it possible to revive the style in a remote corner of the Indian subcontinent, after a pretty long time? In the following may be found an explanation.

The *stupa-sirsha* temples as illustrated in *Astasahasrika*

Prajnaparamita were most probably associated with Buddhism of Tantrik affiliation in Bengal. From this territory the architectural form seems to have spread to Burma, where its popularity is amply illustrated by numerous famous edifices of this type, notwithstanding their local elements. With the revival of Brahmanism in the Sena period, this *stupa-sirsha* type became obsolete in eastern India but was continued in Burma up to twelfth-thirteenth centuries, as evidenced from magnificent edifices of the country mentioned later. After the disastrous fall of Burma in the thirteenth century, the country sank into chaos and disorder and ultimately all artistic activity with Indian affinity came to a standstill and the Indian influence was suppressed by the culture of savage tribes from the north. Moreover, India, the source of all cultural activity in south-east Asia, was herself dominated by Muslims and all her artistic activities fell into a stage of stagnation.

In this period of chaos and disorder in both the countries, the Indo-Mongoloids of north-eastern India came to power and gradually they came under the fold of Hinduism. It is presumable that artists and architects migrated to India from upper and lower Burma via Assam and Chittagang-Tripura respectively. The late medieval art of Tripura as well as other regions of north-eastern India has a close affinity with that of Burma. Perhaps, some architects from Burma took shelter in Tripura and received active patronage from the court. Significantly, nowhere in north-eastern India *stupa-sirsha* temples have been encountered and the monuments of this forgotten architectural style appears to constitute the most important contribution of Tripura to the history of Indian architecture. It is rewarding for the future historian of architecture to go through deep into the study of Tripura style, which is a congenial meeting place of the Burmese and indigenous elements and a restorer of a forgotten style and thus to bring them into the fabric of Indian architectural styles. This unrivalled variety of religious edifices is one of the best sources of history of architecture, no doubt.

(B) *Storeyed type edifice*

A unique tower-like brick-built monument is standing in the heart of the Amarpur town, once a temporary capital of Amar-

manikya (1577-81 A.D.). The monument is standing in a much dilapidated condition and it is hardly possible to shed considerable light on its architectural affiliation. The existing remains of the tower appear to have a height of 40 meters and three storeys are now clearly visible; there might have been a few more. The inner roof of the ground floor is a semi-pointed barrel vault which rises from the east and west walls and supported by corbelled pendentives on north and south. Arrangement of bricks of the vault is very irregular which brings a clumsy effect on it. No steps are found in any part of the building to climb to the upper storeys. Outwardly, it has an appearance of a storeyed tapering structure, upper storeys gradually diminishing in size. The top of the each storey was originally demarcated by a set of mouldings serving as cornice. Below these mouldings a series of terracotta plaques having *gajasinha* motif have been fixed.

The entrance was originally decorated with a stone gateway which is carved with images of different deities. It appears from the pile of ruins that not a single slab of stone has been used in it except in its gateway.

The specimen is the lone extant example of the type represented by it. *Stupa-sirsha* hut type temples were popular in Tripura and numerous examples of this type have been found in different states of preservation. But nowhere in Tripura structures of this kind have come to our view. Whether this has any relation with the south-east Asian tower temples, is difficult to ascertain in the absence of any intelligible evidence. Proper explanations and investigation in search of any textual and monumental evidences may serve the purpose. Likewise nothing definite can be said about the antiquity of this type due to the lack of similar edifices bearing dates. The stone gateway, arched openings moulded bricks similar to those of sixteenth-seventeenth century *stupa-sirsha* temples, however, make it clear this type was also in vogue in the same period, though seemingly it failed to gain much popularity among the royal patrons and common people, and hence the style was abandoned in Tripura and thus became a sporadic example of architectural style.

The sculptural remains recovered from Tripura are the

essential source-material to reconstruct the history of religion, art and iconography of Tripura. The exact beginning of art in Tripura is not known. The eastern division, comprising roughly Bihar, Orissa, Bengal, Assam, Tripura and other north-eastern States, formed, as it were, a culturally homogeneous unit. Significantly enough, while plastic remains of Maurya, Sunga, Kushana and Gupta idioms have been found in other parts of the eastern country, they are till untraceable in Tripura. The phenomenon may be primarily explained by the fact that systematic archaeological excavations and explorations at the old site of Tripura have not yet been undertaken and many such relics might have been lying buried below the ground. The other likely reason of non-discovery of such relics may be sought in the nature of perishable materials like clay, wood and bamboo. The terracotta objects so far recovered are of 'time bound' variety assignable to the period from the seventh-eighth centuries onwards. Another reason seems to be historical. Major parts of Bengal came into close contact with the Aryans where the Imperial Guptas effectively penetrated into this region and hence the autochthonous people of Tripura, which was still an impenetrable territory, remained outside the pale of Aryan influence for about a century or so. Shortly it became a culture-zone of eastern India. This is evident from the material remains themselves. First, all the sculptures of Gupta tradition recovered from the Pilak region, being of local sandstone, were perhaps manufactured in local atelier and therefore, Tripura like her neighbours also appears to have begun her essays in plastic art under the inspiration of Gupta style in seventh-eighth centuries A.D. Second, a large number of 'Gupta imitation' coins on gold have been found in Tripura, particularly in Pilak sector, which has yielded such late Gupta sculptures as referred above.

While the sculptures of Bengal of seventh-eighth centuries were in a phase of transition between Gupta idiom and beginning of Pala art, artists of this region were still under the fold of Gupta tradition. This may be illustrated *inter alia* by a Surya and a Mahisasura-mardini images found at Pilak. Presumably, this style moved to Arakan via land routes through Tripura. Three sandstone sculptures, recovered from Arakan, bear on them a distinct stamp what we call late Gupta tradition of art, of which a Surya

image may be definitely dated to eighth century A.D. on the basis of a writing on the reverse of it.¹⁸ These sculptures have got close resemblance with those recorded from Pilak, as mentioned.

Conceptually and stylistically Tripura sculptures articulate a tradition which is directly derived from the age-old Indian tradition. Yet at the same time they express a local idiom which is noticeable in the general heaviness and coarseness of plastic texture and sometimes in broad and heavy physiognomical form. By and large, Tripura sculptures of pre-fourteenth century A.D. demonstrate the parallel trends visible in eastern and south-eastern Bengal. Their relationship with art of Arakan, Burma and other south-east Asian countries are also unmistakable. Lying midway between Bengal and Arakan-Burma, Tripura developed an art style blending the traditions of both these countries. In fact it is not from purely indigenous works that the Tripura sculpture appears to have been derived. It is indeed an outcome of the combination of local idioms on the one hand and the eastern version of Indian art as well as the art of south-east Asia, on the other.

The plastic examples of Tripura, so far recovered, represent essentially religious art and all of them are icons meant for enshrining in a temple, as evident from tenons. From the iconological point of view, images of Tripura of the early and medieval period is in conformity with eastern Indian images. In the later period, however, Tripura developed an iconoplastic diction of her own, as it were, as Assam did during the Ahom period of her history. The phenomenon appears to have owed its original to the Indo-Mongoloids with a different cultural background who were dominant in the socio-political fabric of the States of Tripura, Assam and the adjoining territories at least from the fourteenth century.

Religiously, the sculptures of Tripura belonged to Brahmanical and Buddhist pantheon, representing divinities like Surya, different varieties of Siva (both in *linga*, and arthropomorphic form), forms of Vishnu, Ganesa, Durga-mahisasuramardini, Indra, Brahma, Ganga, Buddha, Avalokitesvara, Tara, Chunda Hariti, Vajrahunkara, Marichi, etc. Of these, most important

are the colossal Surya images of seventh-eighth centuries A.D. Such massive figures of Surya are not encountered with in eastern India. It appears that Saura cult was quite popular in Tripura during that period and presumably there might be a 'Surya kshetra' in eastern India, like Konarka, situated in Tripura. Only a depth study on the matter may reveal the fact. Other iconographically interesting images are those of two figures of Ganesa, carved on the rocky wall of Unokoti hills. The figures are colossal (30' in height) and differ widely from the usual image of god. They have attenuated waists and four tusks instead of portruded belly and single tusk as prescribed for Ganesa images in Indian iconography. Each of them has a trident on the crest, apparently related with Saivism. This type of Ganesa is never met in Indian iconography whether the artist followed a different prescription, is not known to us as yet. Hundreds of this type of specimens are scattered over Tripura, which may not be described in such a small format. The sculptures of Tripura, particularly post-thirteenth century specimens are the valuable source-material for the study of iconography. Practically they have not received the attention they deserve. Besides the aforesaid images, syncretistic icons like Harihara, Vishnu-lokesvara, Surya-marichi are important.

The monumental remains of post-thirteenth century Tripura are the most important in the history of art and iconography of Tripura. When the creative impulses of northern India suffered a set-back owing to the invasion of the Muslims, Tripura was able to maintain her continuity in tradition though in a separate diction. In the realm of art, Tripura, which was integrally linked up with East Bengal, found her neighbour with her source of creativity dried up due to alien invasion. As a result she had to look into her own source and to express her creative impulses in new iconoclastic terms. Objects produced from the fourteenth century onwards were ideologically Indian, yet distinctively different in character. The localism of the Tripura sculptures of this period are marked by some concepts hitherto unknown. As to the conceptual background, the artists might have followed such iconographic texts which are yet to be known. Alternatively

the cult icons of Tripura during the later period spell out the results of the blending of traditional Hinduism with the religious beliefs and institutions of local people, mostly of Indo-Mongoloid origin, giving rise to a new school of art which may be designated as north-eastern Indian school of late-medieval art and it prosperously flourished in Tripura and its adjoining places. The outcome of this school is the vast complexes of Unokoti and Devatamuda rock-cuts, several stone images and terracotta plaques. The artistic and religious affinity of these sculptures have remained an open question upto now. Only a careful study along with the help on literary text may enable us to unveil ideals of these immense treasures.

The main hindrance of using the aforesaid sources is that, all of the sculptures are not the results of any systematic excavation but are chance findings. Precise chronology of these sculptures is far from certain. Ancient Tripura has not bequeathed to us a single dated sculpture so far. To get a chronological study one may depend mainly on two criteria; first, the style of the relevant sculptures and second, where available, its affiliation with allied finds hailing from Bengal and Burma. During later period dated coins with iconic devices also help a lot in determining the chronology of later sculptures. We are in a better position, however, as regards architecture where dedicatory inscriptions having dates of foundation of the shrines as well as the names of the founders are encountered on the walls of the majority of the temples of the land. It is our utmost belief that an extensive survey for dated materials and textual sources along with legends and tales will mean a fruitful effort on the study of cultural history of this land.

REFERENCES

- ¹ Erstwhile Tripura district (modern Comilla of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh) was known as Tipperah. As the name suggests, the land is not underlaying like the present State of Tripura. It was

directly ruled by the British, a part being in the zamindary of the kings of Tripura.

- ² Very few of the extant monumental remains have been used by the scholars, of whom following are important : (a) Devvarman, S. C., *Tripurar Smriti* (in Bengali), 1927 ; (b) Sen, K. P. (ed.), *Sri-Rajamala*, I-IV, 1926 ; (c) Banerji, Adris, *A monograph on temples of Tripura*, 1968 ; (d) Mitra, Debala, 'Antiquities from Pilak and Jolaibadi', *Journal of Asiatic Society*, XVIII, 1-4. Of these, the last two papers deal with some of temples at Udayapura and a very few sculptures from Pilak in details, others being some more information on some monuments on'y. Closer scrutiny of the repertory is yet to be made.
- ³ Ray, N. R., *Bangalir Itihasa*, p. 119.
- ⁴ Sen, K. P. (ed.), *Sri-Rajamala*, IV, pp. 7-9.
- ⁵ John Phillip, *Tavernier's Travel in India*, pp. 51-52. He refers to Tripura's trade relation with China.
- ⁶ This intermingling of different culture is afoot even today.
- ⁷ Nothing has been known about the origin of the name of Pilak except for a reference of the place-name Pilakka-Vanaka in the inscription of Anandacherda, now kept in Mrohung, Arakan (Mitra, D., 'Antiquities from Pilak and Jolaibadi', *Journal of Asiatic Society*, XVIII, 1-4, p. 56). Coins bearing legend 'Piraka' recovered from Belonia in Tripura has a close affinity with 'Harikela' coinage. If 'Piraka' is taken as the name of a locality, this may be identified with Pilak (Mukherjee, B. N.), *Journal of Ancient Indian History and Culture*, Calcutta, X, pp. 76-77.
- ⁸ The date of the *stupa* has been suggested on the basis of the copper-plate of Devakhagda in the seventh century A.D. See *History of Bengal*, Majumdar, R. C. (ed.), pp. 483-84.
- ⁹ Majority of the temples are datable on the basis of dedicatory inscriptions.
- ¹⁰ No secular building of archaeological importance has survived. Two or three debris of bricks are allegedly to have been said as ruins of the palaces of former rulers but they are beyond recognition. So our discussion is strictly confined to the temple architecture.
- ¹¹ Jagannath Dol of Temple at Udayapur is the lone example of stone-temple of Tripura.
- ¹² David McCutchian classifies them as Muslim domes and places them at par with those of Coochbehar temples (*Late Medieval Temples of Bengal*, p. 56). But his views does not bear scrutiny. The Banesvara temple at Coochbehar tends to show that the architect did not have *stupa* in his view. He completely imitated the Bengal type of Muslim dome in this example. Tripura temples on the other hand are marked by typical *stupa* with its component parts as a crowning member and in this respect bear affinity with some of

Burmese temples. Views of Adris Banerji in this regard are more reasonable (*Temples of Tripura*).

- ¹³ One such inscription has been edited by D. C. Sircar. See 'Two Inscriptions from Tripura State', *Indian Historical Quarterly*, XXXIII, No. 2, 1957.
- ¹⁴ Saraswati, S. K., 'Rare architectural type in Manuscript Illustrations', *Bangladesh Lalitkala*, Dacca, I.
- ¹⁵ Saraswati, S. K., 'Temples of Pagan', *Journal of Greater India Society*, IX, 1942, pp. 11-13.
- ¹⁶ Ray, N. R., *Brahmanical gods in Burma*, pl. I.
- ¹⁷ Saraswati, S. K., *op. cit.*, *Bangladesh Lalitkala*, pp. 1-2.
- ¹⁸ Annual Report, Archaeological Survey of Burma, 1923, p. 28, pl. I.

SOURCES OF THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY OF TRIPURA

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(*Dharmanagar, Tripura*)

THE present State of Tripura¹ was a native State ruled by a royal family of the Tipra tribe with their names ending in *Manikya* during the British days. As a kingdom under the early Manikya rulers it also included Tippera (now Comilla, Bangladesh) and portions of Sylhet, and in an extended sense it comprised the districts of Noakhali and Chittagong. Hence the history of Tripura in the pre-Manikya period is intertwined with that of ancient Samatata, a region roughly corresponding to the present districts of Sylhet, Noakhali and Chittagong.² The present paper deals with the socio-economic and administrative sources of the history of Tripura from the earliest times to the merger of Tripura in the Indian Union (October 15, 1949).

For proper scrutiny of the sources of the history of Tripura we would like to divide it into three periods: (i) ancient period (from the earliest times to the emergency of the Manikya rulers—*c.* A.D. 1400), (ii) medieval period (covering a period from *c.* A.D. 1400) to the beginning of the rule of Krishna Manikya (*c.* A.D. 1760), and (iii) modern period (from *c.* A.D. 1760 to the merger of Tripura in the Indian Union, October 15, 1949).

1. ANCIENT PERIOD

Epigraphic

The major corpus of the materials indispensable for drawing an authentic account of the ancient history of Tripura consists

of those gleaned from the epigraphic records of the Khadgas, the Devas, the Chandras and a few others who ruled in the Tripura sector of ancient Samatata. The importance of epigraphic materials for constructing the history of this region can be hardly over-emphasised. They substantially help in fixing the chronology of the rulers as well as their ruling periods in addition to the chronology of historic events, the names and titles of the kings and their feudatories and their tenure of rule and heroic achievements, apart from the data of social, economic, administrative and religious import.

Following are the epigraphic documents which have been discovered within the limits of ancient Samatata. The earliest archaeological record was a copperplate charter of the year 188 of the Gupta Era (A.D. 507-08) found in the Tippera district, the find-spot being Gunaighar (Comilla, Bangladesh). It proves the rule of a certain Maharaja³ Vainy Gupta in the Tripura region. The next important epigraphic records are the two copperplates hailing from Ashrafpur (30 miles north-east of Dacca) from which we can collect information about the rule of the three Buddhist kings named Khadgodyama, Jatakhadga and Davakhadga, each being the son of his immediate predecessor. They also furnish the names of Devakhadga, his queen Prabhavati and son Rajaraja or Rajarajabhata.⁵ Both the copperplate charters of Devakhadga were issued from Karmantavasaka, usually identified with Badkamta, a police station in Comilla. Besides, an inscribed image of the goddess Sarvani has been discovered at Deulbadi⁶ (about 14 miles to the south of Comilla). This inscription also refers to the three kings mentioned above. These epigraphic records reveal the existence of the Khadga dynasty with their cultural and administrative centre located in the Tripura sector of Samatata. There is also a contemporary document (copperplate of Lokanatha⁷) discovered somewhere in the district of Tippera (now Comilla). It contains a short history of four or five generations of Samantas of the *Natha* family. Another copperplate discovered at Kailan (13 miles west of the Lalmai Railway Station, Comilla) discloses that Jivadharana was the lord of Samatata and his son Sridharana received from him the sovereignty over Samatata. From this record it is known

that the Ratas had their headquarters at Devaparvata which was encircled by the river Kshiroda (probably the Khira or Khirnai, a dried up river course of the Gomati still traceable, just west of the Comilla town).

The next important epigraphic document is the copperplate of *Maharajadhiraja* Bhavadeva from Devaparvata⁹ which recalls that a new family of kings with *Deva* name-ending ruled in this area. The land-grant of Bhavadeva refers to one Vira Deva as the founder of the family. Another Buddhist kingdom also flourished in this region, as is known from an incomplete copperplate hailing from Chittagong.¹⁰ This record supplies the names of three members of this Buddhist family, each being the son of his predecessor : Bhadra Data (*sic.* Bhadra Datta), Dhana Datta and Kantideva who issued the charter.

As many as thirteen inscriptions found in Tippera, Sylhet, Dacca and elsewhere, disclose the existence of seven generations of Chandra rulers, each being the son of his predecessor. They are Purnachandra, Suvarnachandra, Trailokyachandra, Srichandra, Kalyanachandra, Ladachandra and Govindachandra. From the three copperplates of Srichandra it is learnt that the forefathers of Purnachandra were rulers of Rohitagiri, a place which has been located by some in Rohtasgarh in the Shahabad district of Bihar and by others in the Lalmai hills near Comilla. The first politically significant member of this dynasty is Trailokyachandra who originally appears to have been both *de facto* and *de jure* ruler of Harikela.¹¹ The recently discovered Paschimbhag copperplate contains references to his conquest of Samatata.^{11a} Trailokyachandra was succeeded by Srichandra whose copperplate grants were issued from Vikramapura.¹² The Mainamati plates of Ladachandra apprise that Srichandra defeated the king of *Pragjyotisha*.¹³ Srichandra's son Kalyanachandra is said to have defeated the Mlechchhas who lived on the Lauhitya river, as is known from the Mainamati-plate of Govindachandra.¹⁴

The evidence of the Baghaura¹⁵ and Narayanpur¹⁶ image inscriptions found in Tippera (now Comilla) district of the time of a king named Mahipala, leads us to assume that it temporarily went under the control of the Palas, the ruler concerned most probably being Mahipala II (A.D. 1072-75).

The copperplate of Saka 1141¹⁷ discovered in the Mainamati hills informs that Ranavankamalla Harikaladeva granted a piece of land in favour of Buddhist monastery built in the city of Pattikera in Saka 1141 (A.D. 1279).

The history of a new line of rulers is known from five copperplate grants¹⁸ of which three are dated. The genealogical list supplied by these records consists of Purushottama, Madhumathanadeva, Vasudeva, Damodaradeva, Dasarathadeva, each being the son and successor of the former. Dasarathadeva dispossessed the Senas of their hold over East Bengal since his Adavadi copperplate¹⁹ was issued from Vikramapura.

The existence of another Deva family in the Samatata area is learnt from two copperplates discovered at Bhatera²⁰ about 20 miles from Sylhet. Palaeographically both these copperplates belong to the thirteenth century A.D. The family in question consists of five members: Kharavana, Gokuladeva, Narayana, Kesavadeva, Isanadeva, each being the son of his predecessor. By the close of the thirteenth century the Noakhali-Tipperá-Sylhet region came *inter alia* under the occupation of the Muslims. Freedom-loving Hindus came to Hill-Tipperá (of the British days).

Numismatic

The coins so far discovered in this region are also a very important source for constructing the history of the area under discussion. The rule of the Deva family after the Khadgas also seems to have been testified to by the coins bearing the name *Pattikera*, palaeographically assignable to the eighth century A.D.; all of them hail from the Comilla region.²¹ A few coins discovered from the Comilla area with the legend *Akara* on them tend to suggest that the Devas appear to have been immediately followed by a little known *Akara* family.²² Apart from the 8 coins found at Sylhet about 22 years ago,²³ as many as 200 coins of similar type were discovered in the Mainamati at a level of the time of the Chandras (i.e., ninth and tenth centuries).²⁴ More recently a large number of such coins have been found in the Belonia sub-division of south Tripura.²⁵ All of these coins hailing from Sylhet, Mainamati and Belonia are round and die-

The first of these is the fact that the
 government has been unable to
 maintain a consistent policy
 towards the press. In the
 past, it has been known for
 the government to
 suppress the press, but in
 recent years it has
 been known to
 support the press.
 This has led to
 a situation where
 the press is
 unable to
 report on the
 government's
 activities.
 This is a
 serious
 problem,
 and it
 is
 one
 that
 must
 be
 solved.

century" and hence this chronicle is not of much value as a source of the history of Tripura. The view holds good with regard to the ancient kings of Tripura as given in the *Harimand* prior to Rama I a.d. 1404. Rama Manikya I c. A.D. 1404-50. In fact certain amount of confusion exists also in regard to the reign of the said king. But for the history of the period roughly extending from the fifteenth century the *Harimand* account is largely dependable. Facts furnished by it are found corroborated by numismatic as well as epigraphic sources. Thus Dhanya Manikya even bearing the expression *Chakradominant* with the date Saka 1448 corroborates the information about the success of Dhanya Manikya in his battle with Hussain Shah c.A.D. 1493-1510, over which, as supplied by the *Harimand*. Coins of Dhanya Manikya bearing the expression *Durauranayi* confirms the *Harimand* tradition that the king had his sacred bath at *Phala* with the date Saka 1493 following his conquest of Patana and other parts of the kingdom of Patana. A coin of Ramachandraya, dated Saka 1440 and 1441 after to his subjugation of Maitalghana or Maitalghana is also noticed and otherwise unknown. Secondary sources as *Vijaya Manikya* I c. A.D. 1452-60 with the expression *Chakradominant* *Chakradominant* and *Phala* tradition which have already come to light are corroborated by the *Harimand* account of the reigns of the ancient king. Further the recent discovery of an interesting coin of Rama Manikya I with the date Saka 1440 and the legend *Chakradominant* *Chakradominant* *Chakradominant* on its reverse confirms the tradition recorded in the *Harimand* tradition. The worship of the fourteen Tripura deities known as the *Harimand* account of Yama Manikya c. A.D. 1404-20 confirms with the *Harimand* account immediately corroborated by the account of the *Harimand* account a Persian text of the seventeenth century. Hence it stands to reason that though the present editions of the *Harimand* which we have come across are not very old, since the nineteenth century to our belief, the chronicle has got a substantiation of truth and reality and thus may be treated as a primary source for writing the medieval history of Tripura.

Certain literary texts mention the Muslim rulers give invaluable information about Tripura. Special mention may be

made of the *Muktul-Hussain* by Mahammad Khan, the *Ain-i-Akbari* by Abul Fazl, and the *Baharistan-i-Ghabi* by Mirza Nathan. The *Muktul-Hussain* throws welcome light on the struggle between Hamja Khan, probably the Governor-General of Chittagong, and a contemporary of Nusrut Shah (c. A.D. 1519-32) and the Tripura king, Deva-Manikya (c. A.D. 1520-30). While Abul Fazl's *Ain-i-Akbari* throws some light on the reign of Vijaya-Manikya (c. A.D. 1532-63), particularly on his military organisation, the *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi* furnishes valuable information relating to the Tripura-Mughal conflict during the reign-period of Yasa-Manikya of Tripura. It also enlightens us on the history of unknown military strength of Yasa-Manikya. The other Muslim works, namely, *Naubahari-Mursid-Quli-Khani*, *Tarikh-i-Bangala* and *Riyazu-us-Salatin* also provide us with historical information about Tripura. While the former work affords us information about the war between Prince Shah Suja and Kalyana-Manikya, the latter two works give the information as to the Mughal inroads to Tripura during the time of Dharma-Manikya II (c. A.D. 1714-29).

Apart from these Muslim historical works, we find references to Tripura in some other texts, notably the Paragali *Mahabharata* composed during the reign of Hussain Shah (A.D. 1493-1519) and the *Asvamedhaparva* of Srikar Nandi. They have left for us information of immense value regarding the conflict between Hussain Shah and Dhanya-Manikya of Tripura, a fact already referred to. Both these sources aver that Dhanya-Manikya had to acknowledge the supremacy of Hussain Shah, his Gauda adversary, eventually after a long-drawn war.

Tripura's literary texts such as the *Champakavijaya* by Shaik Mahaddi (unpublished), the *Gajinama* by Manohar Saikh (unpublished), the *Krishnamala* by Ramaganga Sarma and Jayanta Chantai (unpublished), the *Srenimala* by Durgamani Ujir, and the *Tripuravamsavali* by Dvijavangachandra give us not only the details about Tripura's political condition under the Manikya rulers, but also religious, economic and social activities of the Tripura kings of the medieval period. The *Champakavijaya* which was composed during the reign of Ratna-Manikya II

(c. A.D. 1685-1712) narrates, among other things, the rebellion headed by Narendra-Manikya during the rule of the said king and his temporary deposition and thus this work may be treated as a primary source of the history of the ruling period of Ratna-Manikya II. Along with this *Champakavijaya* mention is to be made of the *Tripura Buranji* (ed.) by S. K. Bhuiyan (1938), by Ratna Kandali Sarma and Arjundas Vairagi who came to the Court of Ratna-Manikya II, as emissaries of king Rudrasimha of Assam. This text is valuable as a source of the political and socio-economic history of Tripura during the time of Ratna-Manikya II in general and of the personal history of this king in particular. The *Gajinama*, though a product of the nineteenth century, contains a wealth of information about Samser Gaji, whose rise and fall constitute an interesting chapter in the medieval history of Tripura. The *Krishnamala*, composed at the time of Rajadhara-Manikya II (c. A.D. 1785-1806) presents the biography of Krishna-Manikya. The *Srenimala* and the *Tripuravamsavali* throw sidelight on the Manikya family of Tripura. The *Tripuravamsavali* also furnishes the number of elephants in the military organisation of Vijaya-Manikya I. Another book called *Baradamangala* singing the eulogy of goddess Baradesvari, presiding deity of a *pargana* named Baradakhat in Tripura offers a detailed account of the Baradakhat *pargana* of the Tripura kingdom under the eminent Tripura king Dhanya-Manikya (c. A.D. 1490-1520).

Apart from these primary sources, some major secondary works are also helpful in constructing the history of medieval Tripura. In this connection special mention is to be made of Rev. James Long's *Analysis of the Rajmala* (1850) which was regarded as a quasi-primary source for a long time. The care and patience with which the erudite author of the last century has marshalled the facts from the Bengali text is indeed commendable. Of the other relatively old books included in the list of secondary works, special mention may be made of the *Memorandum on the North East Frontier of Bengal* (1869) and the *History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North East Frontier of Bengal* (1884) by Alexander Mackenzie, *History*

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of Bengal (1874) by Stewart Charles, the *Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol. 6 (1876) by W. W. Hunter and *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads, relating to India and neighbouring countries*, Vol. I (1892) by C. U. Aitchinson. Collectively, all these works of British writers help us to reconstruct the history of Tripura of the medieval period. *Tripurar Itihas* (1896) by Kailash Chandra Sinha is also a dependable source for the period under review.

Foreign Accounts

We can also glean valuable materials for reconstructing the medieval history of Tripura from the foreign travellers, notably Europeans. The Portuguese emissary Joao de Silveira came to Chittagong in the early part of the sixteenth century. His account refers to the supremacy of Hussain Shah over Chittagong which was the bone of contention between Hussain Shah and Dhanya-Manikya of Tripura. Ralph Fitch who visited Tripura during the later part of the sixteenth century has left for us certain valuable information in regard to the protracted Tripura-Arakan conflict. Peter Heylen and Vanden Broucke have also helped us by throwing a good deal of light on Tripura under Kalyana-Manikya. While Peter Heylen who came to India about the middle of the seventeenth century, has said that Tripura, a country fenced with hills and mountains, defended the Mughal tartars with whom it had continual bickerings, Vanden Broucke slightly has stated that Tripura was occasionally subjected to the alien rule of the Mughal and Arakan kings. Tavernier who visited Bengal in the second half of the seventeenth century, has afforded us a glimpse into Tripura's resources, sources of revenue and its merchants of the relevant period whom he came across at Dacca and Patna.

3. MODERN PERIOD

For the history of Tripura of modern period we have to depend mainly on literary and numismatic evidences.

Literary

The contemporary works of the British writers mentioned above furnish materials for constructing the history of Tripura of the modern period. Of these works, Hunter's *Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol. 6 (1876) deserves special mention. It deals not only with the contemporary Manikya administration consisting of civil, police, revenue, village and military departments but also with the tribal people of the land, particularly on their system of cultivation (jhum cultivation), their social organisation, and their economic life and artistic merit. It also dwells on the condition of the trade and commerce of Tripura of the period under review. *Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors*, Vol. I (1901) by C. E. Buckland and *History of Tripura* (1915 ?) by E. F. Sandys (it is now in the collection of the National Library, Calcutta) afford the information about Tripura up to the second decade of the twentieth century A.D. Sandys's *History of Tripura* is not always critical, despite the wealth of information it contains. Collectively, all these British works considerably help us to draw the history of Tripura during the late nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth century providing many invaluable historical materials.

Some of the important works of the Tripura scholars may not be lost sight of. Among them, *Tripurar Itihas* (1896) by Kailash Chandra Sinha, *The Progressive Tripura* (1930) by A. C. Bhattacharya, the *Udaipur Bibaran* (1930) by Brajendrachandra Datta deserve special mention. Sinha's work may be used as a primary source-book, particularly relating to the period of Virachandra-Manikya (A.D. 1862-96), in view of the fact that the author was an employee under him. As his predecessors also served the earlier Tripura rulers, Sinha's work is also largely dependable for the reigns of the immediate forebears of Virachandra-Manikya, such as, Isanachandra-Manikya (A.D. 1849-62) and Krishnakisore-Manikya (A.D. 1830-49). *The Progressive Tripura* is considerably helpful for the period from the rule of Virendra Kisore-Manikya (1909) to the end of the reign of Viravikrama Kisore for invaluable information as to the contemporary administration prevalent in Tripura. Datta's work

is also a very important source for the history of the period under review. The *Desiya Rajya* written by Mahimehandra Thakur (this book was published by his son Somendrachandra Deb Barma in 1334 B.S.) is also a valuable book for reconstructing the history of this period. It deals with the contemporary administration as well as the history and culture of the Tripura people.

The *Gazetteers* and the *Reports* also provide us with valuable historical materials. For example, the *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. XIII* (1908) and the *Reports on the Administration of Bengal* (1878-79), (1881-82), (1888-89) and (1914-15) and the *Annual Administrative Report of the Political Agents of Hill Tipperah* (1877-78) and *Sardar Patel's Correspondences, Vols. V and VIII* are relevant sources for reconstructing the history of the period under review.

Apart from these sources, historical materials for constructing the history of modern period can also be gleaned from the *Indian Nations*, July 31 (1899), the *Englishman*, March 12 (1918), the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, August 20 and September 1 (1904) and the *Chuntaprakas*, January 16 (1929) and January 16 (1930). The official records of this time also offer valuable information about the contemporary administration of Tripura.

Among recent works for portraying the political, social and economic history of Tripura of modern period, *Tripura's Tie with Tagore* published by Education Directorate, Govt. of Tripura (1969), *The Transition in Bengal* (1969) by Abdul Majed Khan, *Tripuradeser Katha* (1372 B.S.) and *Tripura in Transition* (1970) by Tripurachandra Sen, *Kirata-jana Kriti* (2nd edition, 1974) by Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, *Tripura State Gazetteer Sankalan* (1971), *Tripura District Gazetteers* (1975), *Rangji Tripurar Sarkari Bangla* (1976), and *Tripura through the Ages* (1977) by N. R. Ray Choudhury deserve special mention. These works also contain much information about Tripura of the earlier two periods.

Apart from these literary sources, information about Tripura of this period may also be collected from the coins issued by

Krishna-Manikya and his successors. Like the previously mentioned *Manikya* coins, these coins also help us to know the names of the kings and their consorts, their coronation dates, their titles and their tenure of rule in addition to the date of social and religious value.

In respect of epigraphic source, this period is very poor. Two inscriptions are so far reported. The land-grants of Saka 1689 and Saka 1698 of Krishna-Manikya (c. A.D. 1760-83) deserve special mention.^{38a} The *sloka* which was written and placed under the ground at the time of the foundation of the Ujjayanta Palace, now the Legislative Assembly House of Tripura (1309 *Tripuravda*) also deserves mention.

The noteworthy historians utilizing some of the epigraphic records noted above on different occasions include R. D. Banerjee, R. C. Majumdar, R. G. Basak, P. L. Paul, and a few others. They have used these materials while portraying the picture of the early history of Bengal. Dr. Majumdar has used most of the epigraphic documents stated so far in his *History of Bengal I* (1943), *History of Ancient Bengal* (1971) and *Bangladeser Itihas, I* (1373 B.S.). While composing the ancient history of Bengal, the historians, presumably due to exigencies of space, have succinctly dealt with the Tripura sector of Samatata. In fact, the only scholars who have attempted to indicate Tripura's significant role, are scholars from Bangladesh. The humble author of the present paper, however, has brought into relief for the first time the history of Tripura (a much wider region in ancient times) prior to the Manikyas which is wrapped in obscurity, in his book, *Political History of Tripura*.³⁹ This has been done by piecing together evidences gleaned from epigraphic and other records cited before. Annals of the royal dynasties like the Khadgas, the Devas and the Chandras who ruled in the Tripura region for a prolonged period, have been incorporated in this book, thus tracing back the history of the State to a knowledgeable limit. Though these archaeological and other records have been utilised by a great many writers including the writer of the present paper himself, a closer study of these records will still prove to be useful for the history of the more

remote past of Tripura.

The historians using the materials mentioned above for constructing the history of Tripura of medieval and modern periods include Kailash Chandra Singha, Jadunath Sarkar, R. C. Majumdar, Kaliprasanna Sen, A. C. Bhattacharya, Nalini Ranjan Roy Choudhury and the author of the present paper. Both Kailash Chandra Sinha and Kaliprasanna Sen have attempted to write the history of Tripura under the Manikya rulers chiefly relying on the *Rajamala* ('the string of kings'), the State chronicle of the Tripura royal family, although they have used some of the Manikya coins available at their time as well as some epigraphic and literary records. Kaliprasanna Sen's discussion on the history of Tripura chiefly on the basis of the *Rajamala* in the *Madhyamani* embodied in his three volumes, *Sri-Rajama'a* (1926, 1927 and 1939), is not free from shortcomings although it is otherwise useful and informative. Bhattacharya's *Progressive Tripura* (1930) passes slightly over the political history of Tripura under the Manikya family and is mainly based on the *Rajamala*. Dr. Majumdar in his *Bangladeser Itihas : Madhyajug* (1st Edition, 1966 ; 2nd Edition, 1973) and *History of Mediaeval Bengal* (1973), presumably due to exigencies of space, has briefly dealt only with the political history of the Manikya rulers. While writing this history, Dr. Majumdar has mainly depended on the coins issued by the Manikya kings as well as the *Sri-Rajamala* mentioning a very few epigraphic documents and other literary sources. He has not utilized the *Rajamala* published by the Education Directorate, Govt. of Tripura (1967), which contains valuable information about medieval Tripura. Nalini Ranjan Roy Choudhury's booklet *Tripura through the Ages* (1977) presents a bird's-eye view of the Tripura history from the earliest times to the present day. In this book he has used very few epigraphic records mentioned above but not in details. He has also utilized some of the Manikya coins while writing the medieval and modern history of Tripura and has used other literary records, notably the available two versions of the *Rajamala*. Anyway, his book is otherwise useful and informative. The author of the present paper may modestly claim that he is the first researcher in Tripura to use in details

the available epigraphic, numismatic and the various literary sources including the *Sri-Rajamala* and the *Rajamala*, while writing his book, *Political History of Tripura* (unpublished).

The socio-economic and religious history of Tripura are yet to be written and this can be done by dint of a thorough study of the above-mentioned literary sources, notably the *Rajamala* which is replete with materials of socio-economic and religious import and this history may undoubtedly be supplemented by numismatic as well as epigraphic sources. In this connection it will not be wide of the mark to say that few works about Pilak, under Belonia sub-division of south Tripura and Unokoti under Kailashahar sub-division of north Tripura, where historical materials for writing the full-length social and religious history of Tripura are still lying scattered. A thorough excavation work over Pilak and its neighbouring areas will enrich our knowledge in respect of the early history of Tripura. The discovery of a good number of stone images,⁴⁰ certain terracotta temple plaques and seals with the depiction of *stupa* and Buddhist creed leads us to surmise that this region was a part and parcel of ancient Samatata in the remote past under the different royal families ruling in the Tripura sector of Samatata.

Reliefs of divinities⁴¹ carved on the Unokoti hill at the place of the same name are objects of interest to artists and antiquarians and of adoration to religious-minded people and pilgrims. But the history of the Unokoti pilgrimage is still shrouded in obscurity. If this obscure history of this place is known, a great chapter of the religious history of Tripura will be revealed.

REFERENCES

- ¹ The present State of Tripura, with its capital at Agartala, is located between 20°56' and 24°32' north and 91°10' and 92°21' east and measures about 10,477 square kilometres with a population of about 16 lacs. It is now a full-fledged State (it attained Statehood on

January 21, 1972), divided into three districts—North Tripura, West Tripura and South Tripura with respective headquarters at Kailashahar, Agartala and Udaipur. Theories seeking its origin from the name of the goddess called Tripurasundari or from that of a mythical ruler called Tripura are not tenable. The correct view seems to be that Tripura is the Sanskritised form of the Bodo word *Tipra* which denotes the tribe of the same name as well as the languages spoken by them (variantly called *Mrung*).

- ² For the varying limits of Samatata, see J. F. Fleet's *Topographical List of the Brihat-Samhita* (edited by K. K. Dasgupta), p. 86.
- ³ *IHQ*, 1930, pp. 40ff. In a seal discovered at Nalanda, Vainya-Gupta has been given the title Maharajadhiraja, which undoubtedly indicates his independent status. For this seal see *ASI, AR*, 1930-34, p. 130; also *IHQ*, XIX, p. 275. For Vainya-Gupta's gold coin with the epithet *Dvadasaditya*, see *IHQ*, IX, p. 784f.
- ⁴ *MASB*, I, No. 6, pp. 85-95; *JASB*, XIX, 1923, p. 375.
- ⁵ One of the plates discovered in the ruins of the Salban Vihara in the Mainamati hills gives us the name of a king Balabhata who may be regarded as a successor of Rajabhata. See Morrison, B. M., *Political Centres and Cultural Regions in Early Bengal*, Arizona, U.S.A., 1970, p. 21. The plate is still unpublished.
- ⁶ *EI*, XVII, p. 357f.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, IXV, pp. 301-15; Basak, *HNI*, p. 238; *IHQ*, XXIII, p. 232f.
- ⁸ *IHQ*, XXIII, pp. 221-41.
- ⁹ The exact findspot of the copperplate, which is now in the collection of the Asiatic Society, is unknown. It has been edited by D. C. Sircar in *JAS*, Letters, XVII, 1951, pp. 83-94. Two more inscriptions of this family have been reportedly recovered from the excavation at Salban Vihara, near the Lalmai-Mainamati hills. One of them belongs to Bhavadeva, the other to his father Anandadeva. See Chowdhury, Abdul Momin, *Dynastic History of Bengal*, p. 149.
- ¹⁰ *EI*, XXVI, pp. 313-18.
- ¹¹ Harikela originally denoted Srihatta, but came to signify a broader area under the name of Vanga with the expansion of the powers of its rulers. For details see Majumdar, R. C., *Ancient History of Bengal*, p. 9.
- ^{11a} Madanpur copperplate of Srichandra, *EI*, XXVIII, p. 51, 33f; Rampal copperplate, *ibid.*, XII, p. 136; Kedarpur copperplate, *ibid.*, XVII, p. 188; Dhula copperplate, *ibid.*, XXXIII, p. 134f; Edilpur copperplate, *ibid.*, XVII, p. 189f.
- ¹² K. Gupta, *Copperplates of Sylhet* (henceforth CS), p. 81f.
- ¹³ *PIHC*, XXIII, 1960, pt. I, p. 36.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ *EI*, XVII, pp. 353-55.
- ¹⁶ *Indian Culture*, IX, pp. 121-24.

¹⁷ *IHQ*, IX, p. 282f.

¹⁸ Mehar plate of Damodaradeva, Saka 1156, see *EI*, XXVII, pp 182-91 ; Sobharampur plate of Damodaradeva, Saka 1158, see *Ibid.*, XXX, p. 184f ; Chittagong plate of Damodaradeva, Saka 1165 ; Majumdar, N. G., *IB*, pp. 158-63

¹⁹ *IB*, p 181f. The other record of Dasarathadeva is the Pakamuda inscription, *Itihas*, VIII, 1364-65 BS, p 160

²⁰ Bhatera copperplate of Govindakesavadeva, *EI*, XXIX, p 277f ; K. Gupta, *CS*, p 153f ; Bhatera copperplate of Isanadeva, *PASB*, 1880, p. 141 ; *CS*, p. 184f.

²¹ *Journal of the Varendra Research Museum*, IV, 1975-76, pp 20-24.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ D W MacDowall published these coins in the *Numismatic Chronicle*, XX, 1966, pp. 229-33, pl. VI.

²⁴ F. A. Khan. *Recent Archaeological Discoveries in East Pakistan* ; Mainamati, Karachi, 1955, pp. 10-11 ; also A H Dani, 'Coins of the Chandra kings of East Bengal', *JNST*, XXIV, pts. 1-2, 1962, p 141f A few similar coins are also reported from Paharpur, *Ibid*

²⁵ *Coin Review*, June-July, III-IV, 1976, pp 2-3, pls 1-II ; also *JAIH*, X, 1976-77, p. 167.

²⁶ *JAS*, XVIII, 1976, p. 99.

²⁷ Phayre, A. P., *History of Burma* (1883), pp 49-50 ; Paul, P L., *Early History of Bengal*, I (Introduction), p. 6

²⁸ *JASB*, New series, XIX, p 378 ; also Majumdar, R C., *History of Ancient Bengal*, 1971, p. 78.

²⁹ These coins are die-struck, made of silver and round or roundish in shape. They have an average weight of 1050 grammes 9163 grains, approxumating to the *tanka* standard (115 grammes or 172 grains) of the Bengal Sultans with identificatory legends in the Bengali characters on the obverse. They are of six denominations : full, half, quarter, one-eighth, one-sixteenth and one-thirty-second. Now unoften these species also carry dates. While their obverse bears legends only, their reverse device usually consists of a grotesque lion. Figures of deities like Vishnu, flute-playing Krishna, Ardhanarisvara and Garuda are also met with on their reverse. Other rare motifs include fish, trident, crescent and Sivalinga. The kings of Tripura issued coins on three occasions—coronation, conquests and pilgrimage.

These coins belong to the cabinets of different Museums, such as the Tripura Museum, British Museum (London), Ashmolean Museum (Oxford), Dacca Museum and Indian Museum. Private collections like those of Basanta Chaudhury, Parimal Roy, G S. Beed and H. P. Poddar are reportedly rich in the Tripura coins. Two gold coins of full *tanka* standard are known. One of them was issued



